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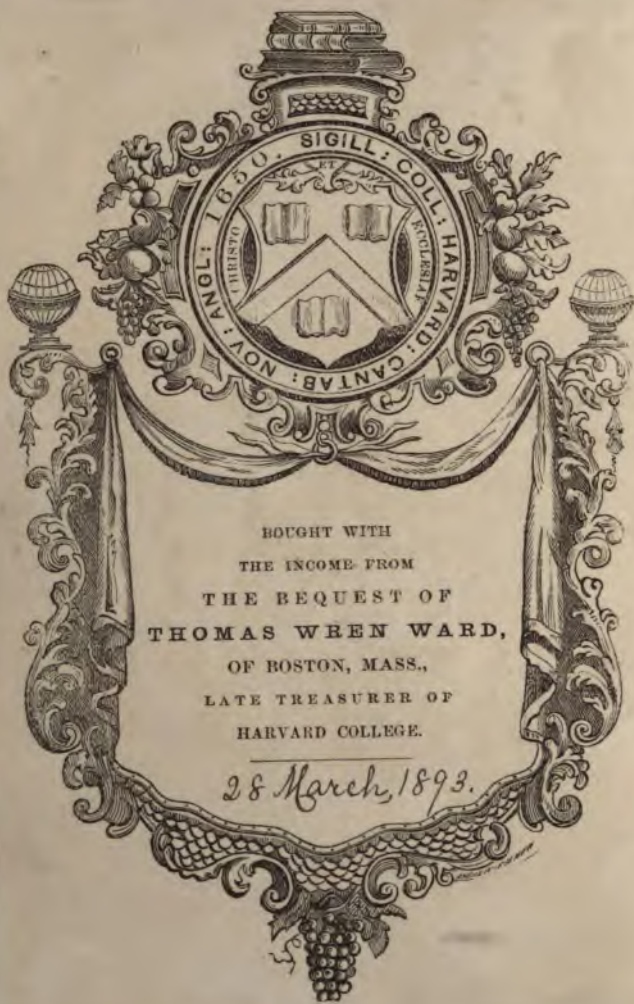
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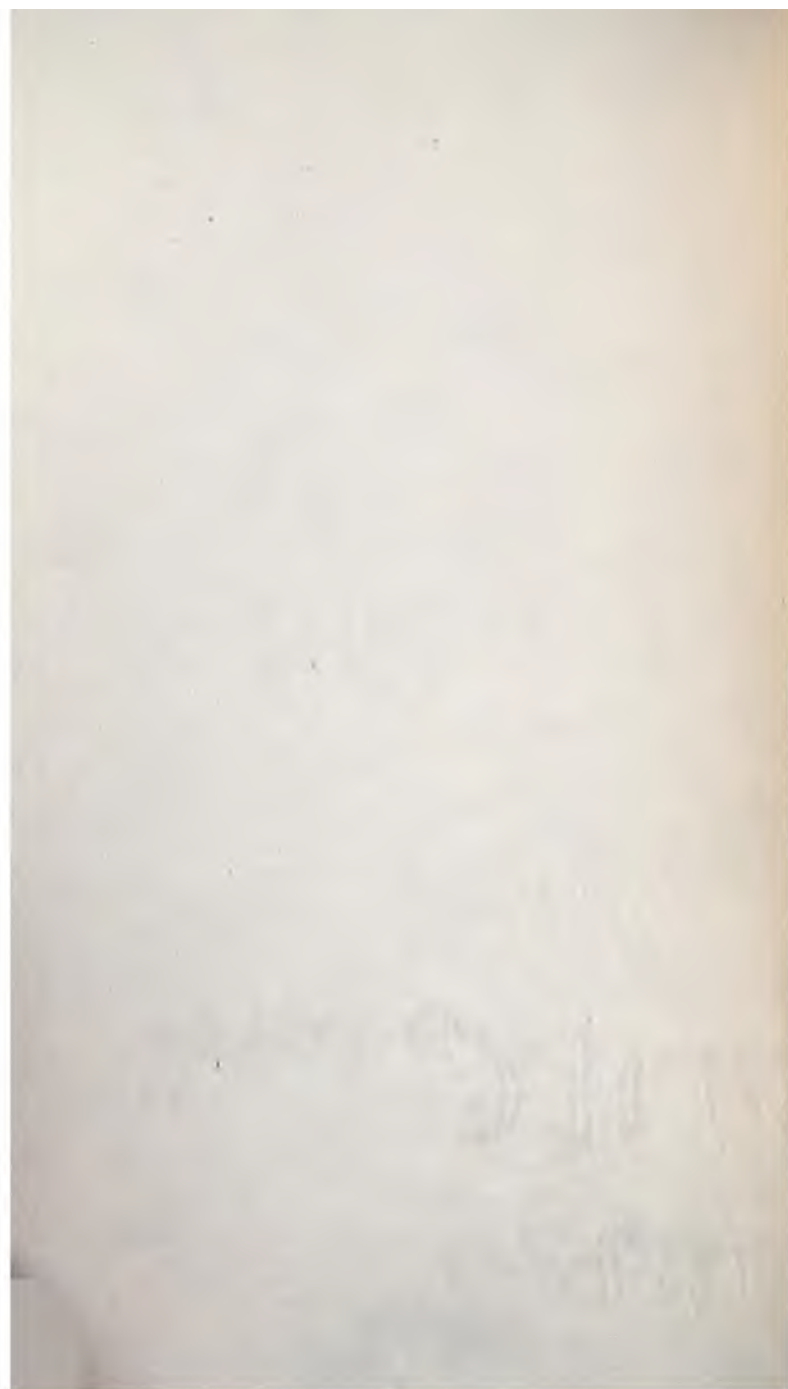
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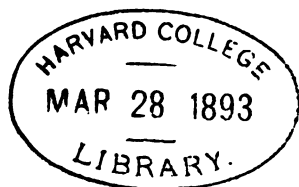
"O wer weiss,
Was in der Zeiten Hintergrunde schlummert ;"
SCHILLER: *Don Carlos*

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In Affectionate Memory

OF

H. F. W.

✠ *Nice, January 26, 1884*

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY	I
I. PAST AND PRESENT	10
II. THE GERMANS	21
III. THE CZECH	35
IV. THE HUNGARIANS	46
V. THE JEW	75
VI. THE VIENNESE	92
VII. THE EMPEROR	111
VIII. THE NOBILITY	129
IX. THE NOBILITY (<i>continued</i>)	146
X. THE ARMY	164
XI. THE ARMY (<i>continued</i>)	175
XII. THE PRIEST	188
XIII. THE AUSTRIAN MIDDLE CLASSES	207

CHAP.	PAGE
XIV. THE AUSTRIAN MIDDLE CLASSES (<i>continued</i>)	221
XV. THE AUSTRIAN MIDDLE CLASSES (<i>continued</i>)	241
XVI. THE PEASANT	261
XVII. WOMANKIND IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY	278
XVIII. CONCLUSION	296

THE REALM OF THE HABSBURGS

INTRODUCTORY

. . . . οὐ γὰρ οἱ πλατεῖς,
Οὐδ' εὐρύνωτοι φῶτες ἀσφαλέστατοι·
'Αλλ'οἱ φρονοῦντες εὖ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ *

SOPHOCLES (*Ajax*)

I

To many Englishmen the very term "Austria," or—as this at one time most powerful country in Europe is called since the Covenant of 1867†—"Austria-Hungary," conveys a somewhat hazy geographical as well as political idea. And this is the case

* "For not the stout or the broadbacked men are the most sure ; those rather who keep their wits come everywhere to the front."

† The Covenant of 1867 (Law of December 21), re-constituted the Empire as two inseparable and constitutional monarchies, hereditary in the House of Habsburg-Lorraine ; it gave Hungary important separate State Rights, and perpetuated the Habsburg dominion under the denomination of Austria-Hungary.

notwithstanding that England and Austria have been allies on many momentous occasions and fought side by side on many a hard-fought field. Who will say, too, that to-morrow some political complication may not again suddenly concentrate the attention of Europe on the banks of the Danube? The country itself is comparatively seldom visited by tourists * from the west of Europe, and is even less read about. Thus it is that this most fertile, as well as most picturesque, part of the Continent—lavishly endowed as it is by Nature—is as little known to us as are the character of its inhabitants, their many racial distinctions, and their varied social and political life.

Yet there never was a time in which it was more imperative than it is at present to investigate the psychological aspect of things in the wide domain of the national life of neighbouring peoples. The electric telegraph, the network of railways, the extraordinary impulse given to production of every kind all the world over, are all by degrees bringing about a state of affairs in which the struggle for existence among communities as among individuals, seems destined to become acute. We are being brought so near to one another that we can no longer afford to ignore each other's existence; but the struggle thus looming in the future has not hitherto

* The so-called Salzkammergut and the Tyrol are exceptions to the above statement. According to the statistics for 1890, German-speaking Tyrol alone boasted 190,575 visitors during the year, who spent over seven million florins in the country. The statistics of Italian-speaking Tyrol are not given.

led to much mutual knowledge of character or of institutions.

The following pages are mainly intended to be a small contribution to the study of the psychology of nations, and to show, among other things, how even classic virtue may be insufficient in the battle of life, the palm of which is now more than ever allotted to the "fittest."

II

Austria is a country which stands geographically, economically, as well as politically, midway between the past and the present. Geographically Austria borders on the west on highly developed Germany, while on the east it touches stagnation. In parts of Austria the past in all its phases is still blended with the present in proportions hardly to be met with elsewhere in Europe. For whilst the tourist can traverse Hungary by rail, by virtue of the new Zone tariff, for less money than he can travel first-class from Dover to Calais, in this same Hungary over half a million of hand ploughs made of wood still furrow the fertile soil.*

In England, the Royalty of the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts has given place to a mild form of social regal presidency—an amiable but arduous leadership, through the mazes of Society's cotillon. Seated on the throne of the Austria of to-day is the

* "Die Landwirtschaft Ungarns." Prof. Dr. E. v. Rodiczky.

same family which held sway there in the days of our Plantagenets. And, although the despotic rule of those days has given place to the prevailing milder form of representative government, yet the fervid loyalty of past ages, elsewhere dead, still survives in the hearts of the soil-nurtured Austrian peasant, of the town-bred citizen, and of the noble in his princely ancestral home.

With us the distinctive garb of the people has long disappeared, together with the class life of the rural population. A visitor coming to England, fresh from Austria, must be surprised to see the lower orders—particularly the women—dressed in the soiled and bedraggled left-off finery of the middle classes. Among Austria's many nationalities, each still retains its characteristic picturesque garb and its traditional customs.

In Germany, as in England, an enormous increase in the population of great towns is everywhere apparent, in its results gradually undermining the old landmarks of the people, which connected them with the soil from which they sprang. In Austria, on the other hand, all these elements of modern change have had less play and their influence is far less evident.

In republican France, the Revolution has swept away the once powerful landed aristocracy, and reduced the Catholic prelate to a small fixed salary. In Austria there are still territorial magnates, whose wealth and the extent of whose possessions vie with those of our greatest landowners. There are

Princes of the Church in Austria as well as in Hungary, whose incomes make even our Archbishops' princely salaries appear small by comparison.

That, however, which must chiefly attract the interest of the politician towards Austria is the fact of her rupture with her autocratic past, and her embarking upon the broad waves of modern Liberalism. This is the most stupendous experiment of political patent-medicine methods—as opposed to gradual and natural evolution—that is to be met with in the wider fields of political history.

III

Some of us can remember the easy-going pre-1866 days—the closing epoch of the older *régime*—when the pick of Austria's crack regiments could be seen doing garrison duty as far west as Frankfurt-on-the-Main. The Austrians, Prussians, and Bavarians mounted guard on alternate days. But people had no eye for the cold mechanical Prussian goose-step, and for those raw, beardless Prussian recruits, who looked so fagged, and were said to have such a distressing time of it under the iron discipline of the brutal drill-sergeant. The uniforms of the latter, too, were dull to look upon; they fitted badly, and emphasised the angularity of the big bones of the wearers. We did not then know that the Austrians, besides being picked troops, were long-service men, who naturally contrasted favour-

ably with Pomeranian recruits. And who could help admiring the well-knit Austrian—many of them swarthy fellows from the Italian provinces of Lombardy—who seemed to combine the natural grace of the Southern with the chivalric bearing of the flower of the Teutonic race?

Those were days when the great thinker, Arthur Schopenhauer, used to eat enough for three at the *table d'hôte* of the Hotel d'Angleterre. There he might be seen sitting at the bend of the triangular dinner-table surrounded by dishes, which the waiters slyly piled up before and around him, and which he testily pushed aside. His was a queer old gorilla face, with the bristling hair and the keen flashing eyes; but philosophy in his case evidently did not lead to disdain of the creature comforts of life. Down at the further end of the table, towards the door, the Austrian cavalry officers congregated. We only heard, many years afterwards, from Challemeil-Lacour, the French writer and diplomatist, that the wily old philosopher used day by day to make a silent bet with himself that those gay cavalry men would never talk at table of any other subject than women, horses, and their chances of regimental preferment. Neither did it particularly attract our attention when we saw now and again a Prussian officer sitting among them, for few of the Prussians could afford the luxury of the *table d'hôte* at the Hotel d'Angleterre. But now it all floods back on one's memory; a spare, wiry figure, with cold, steel-grey eyes, politely but decisively

laying down the law on some subject or other to the ill-concealed discomfiture of his Austrian listeners—quietly nonplussed by the outcome of wider knowledge and cool perception of fact. There in a nutshell lay the key to much that was hidden still from the majority, but was soon to be revealed to all alike.

IV

Only a few brief years later, and all Europe is breathless, for the Angel of Death is at work, reaping his grim harvest amid the golden cornfields of Bohemia. His servants were first the bullet and then the cholera. It is a sultry summer eve, and the Prussians are busy installing themselves for the night in the little town of Podol, around and in which a tough encounter with the enemy had taken place during the day. Suddenly the alarm is given, the drums beat—the Austrians are coming on in full force, a part of the renowned Iron Brigade among them, to turn the Prussians out of Podol. There they come, along the high-road, and here stand the Prussians, holding the bridge that commands the road leading back into the town. The needle-guns are ready, and at the dry word of command whole lines of the brave Austrians bite the dust! But on come others over the dead and dying, and again the needle-gun rattles its death-knell into the quivering lines of stout human hearts. The road is blocked up with the dead as by a

parapet. At last silence and the night supervene. The Austrians have left their killed and wounded behind, and disappeared in the darkness. The Prussian cavalry ride up and see the ghastly heaps of dead and dying intermingled.

"Du lieber Gott," says a Prussian officer—possibly the very grey-eyed debater of Frankfort *table d'hôte* days—"if *that* is the senseless way they are going to lead these poor fellows to the slaughter, we shall not have much to fear in this business."

"Ah, Kam'rad," calls out a wounded Austrian officer, "you manage to keep your asses in the rear—we have got ours, alas! in front."

And the birth-throes of a new era long prepared are being laboured through in agony on these very plains of Bohemia in the course of a few short weeks. Amid the ripe cornfields the wounded Austrian is seen limping along, supported by his stick, his uniform still dyed with the blood and dirt of the battle-field, a prisoner in his own country!*

Who can wonder at the disgust of the old ex-Emperor, Ferdinand, living quietly in retirement at Prague? When they told him that the victorious Prussians were coming, and that he had better take to flight, he is reported to have said: "If that is all the good you have done, you need not have taken the trouble to make me abdicate in '48."

* The campaign of 1866 was the last one fought in Europe under the old barbarous system of helplessness with regard to the care for the wounded. Austria-Hungary joined the Geneva Red Cross Association immediately after it.

Where is now your heroism, your chivalry? Not even a word of recognition for the willing sacrifice of your good honest bones. "If that is all you have got to show, we have not much to fear!"

Surely the portent of this did not confine itself to the plains of Bohemia, nor even to the time of its occurrence. The lesson is to be read to-day! Thus shall the blind devotion of the past prove unavailing—go down before highly organised discipline in time to come, whilst the many lull themselves into false security, fondly believing in a millennium of peace and inanition.

CHAPTER I

PAST AND PRESENT

Austria erit in orbe ultimâ

I

THE Realm of the Habsburgs is an old country in many other senses than that of antiquity of origin.* Austria is old by the tenacity of her tradition, and by the still unchanged character of her inhabitants amid the latest political innovations. While England and France are to-day so coloured by modern civilisation that scarcely more than dead stones remain to recall even the comparatively recent period of mediæval chivalry, almost everything in Austria has still a flavour of ages long since passed away.

There must be something soothing in the peaceful

* The name of *Oesterreich*, originally applied to the territory situated above and below the river Enns, is not mentioned in history much before the year one thousand of our era. It first occurs in a deed of gift in the reign of Count Henry the Strong, who ruled over the province in question about the year 994 A.D. It is about a thousand years since first mention is made of the name of Hungary.

retirement of the picturesque old Austrian towns, which has so often acted as an attraction to legitimate monarchs "out of work," and bade them seek refuge on Austrian soil in preference to any other. The Duchess of Berry, Charles X., the late Duke of Chambord, and, lastly, the late King of Hanover, all ended their days on Austrian territory. Decadence and decay lose much of their terrors amid scenery, the effect of which is to remove our thoughts from earthly vanities. It is only in accordance with the fitness of things that a long line of kings of another powerful monarchy of the past—that of Poland—should also have found their last resting-place in Austria.*

As in the case of Poland, the history of Austria is inseparably connected with that of its monarchs. In truth, we have here the history of one and the same family registering the ups and downs, the sunshine and storm, which have affected the fortunes of millions of human beings for six centuries† and marked the destiny of a realm, the sway of which was at one time more extensive than the rest of Europe combined.

At the time of the Reformation, her rule was so extensive that the Emperor Charles the Fifth could boast—as Queen Victoria may to-day—that the sun never set in his dominions. Even in our time, the Emperor of Austria-Hungary rules over 41,000,000

* The kings of Poland are buried in Cracow.

† Since 1278, the date of the battle of Marchfeld, in which Rudolph of Habsburg defeated Ottokar, king of Bohemia.

human beings, distributed over an area of about 240,000 square miles; the greatest number of souls and the largest extent of territory, if we except Russia, under the direct sway of any one monarch in Europe.

II

The Hohenstaufen, the Habsburgs,* and the Hohenzollerns are the three great royal Houses round which has revolved the political history of the middle of Europe during the last eight hundred years. All three are of Germanic blood, all three are descended from families whose ancestral castles, strange to say, were situated in close propinquity to one another in the south-west of Germany. Though identical in origin, however, their part in history has, on the contrary, been widely divergent.

The Hohenstaufen Emperors, nearly 800 years ago, endeavoured to play the great national part which has fallen to the lot of the House of Hohenzollern in our time. "Frederick the Second, the ablest and most accomplished of the long line of German Cæsars, had in vain exhausted all the resources of military and political skill in the attempt to defend the rights of the civil power against the encroachments of the Church. The vengeance of the priesthood had pursued his House to the third generation, Manfred

* Habsburg (originally Habichtsburg, that is, Hawkscastle), an old German family, which takes its name from the old Swiss castle of Habsburg, now in ruins, situated on the river Aar in the Canton of Aargau.

had perished on the field of battle, Conradin on the scaffold."* They were in truth before their time, and to the Habsburg dynasty fell the succession to the dignity of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. But whereas the Hohenstaufen had perished fighting for essentially German ideals against the temporal power of Rome, the Habsburgs became great by direct co-operation with Catholicism.

There was a time, during the Reformation, when the power and with it the supremacy of the Habsburg rule was seriously imperilled; but the regeneration of Catholicism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strengthened the foundations of Habsburg power and ensured their successive possession of the elective dignity of Holy Roman Emperors of German nationality, down to the final collapse of the Holy Roman Empire itself.

It is beyond our province to dwell even in outline on the record of what is, broadly speaking, the history of the human race for a long period. All through succeeding centuries we find the power of the Church as the basis of the Catholic State, which in its turn is supported in its autocratic character by the priesthood of Rome—notably the Jesuits. Throughout this period Catholicism is seen working side by side with the House interests, the so-called House policy of the Habsburgs. And this continues down to the time when the latter are confronted by an antagonistic force of a

* Lord Macaulay : *Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes.*

similar kind—namely, the expansive ambition of the Royal House of France.

From the time of Charles the Fifth down to our own, the policy of France was almost solely directed towards the humbling of the power, which uniting the Netherlands, Burgundy (in part) and Spain under its sway, had taken a French king prisoner in battle.

We all know how the growth of French power, only rendered possible by the internal dissensions of the Teutonic race which lasted for several centuries, gradually forced the House of Habsburg from their possessions in the Netherlands, Spain, and even the Rhine, until the work of Richelieu was crowned, and the Habsburgs were compelled to give up most of the immense territories which they had gained by a succession of prudent marriages.

This, however, is beside our purpose, as also is the trite assertion that if the Habsburg dynasty had not invariably been guided by dynastic rather than by broader national considerations, a Habsburg Kaiser might still be crowned in Frankfort-on-the-Main, and Metz and Strasburg need never have formed part of France. The history of the world is as full of "might have been" as the life of any humble inhabitant of our planet.

III

The result is all that concerns us. The Catholic Habsburgs were unable to dim the glorious German

national traditions attaching to the memory of the Hohenstaufen. These embodied an idea, which the Habsburgs ever failed to realise, and this idea became engrafted on and found nourishment in the spirit of Protestantism. The Catholic and politically egotistic character of the House of Habsburg failed to awaken that sympathy in their fortunes which would have been necessary in order to bring the genius of Germany to identify its interests with those of Austria. That Germany should do so was, perhaps unconsciously, the ambition of the Emperor Joseph II. He endeavoured to break with priest power and inaugurate a new era. But although he was never tired of asserting that he was above all a German Sovereign, the sufferings of centuries made Germany deaf to his words. Nor was he one of those historic personages capable of changing the current of history. He perhaps foresaw that Catholicism meant in the end severance from the best intellect of Germany. Nature had not, however, fitted him for great political work. He would actually rush out at night to assist in extinguishing a fire in Schönbrunn, whilst the kingdom of Bohemia was aflame with war brought about by his state-manship.

In this way, then, originated a split in the great central Teutonic Empire of Europe, and it has been left to our time to witness the final result—namely, the severance of Protestant and national Germany from the Catholic House dominion of the Habsburgs.

In this instance the fortunes of one autocratic and Catholic family have swayed a mighty period of the past. By a strange coincidence its eclipse was almost coeval with the great economical, intellectual, and political evolution in the midst of which we are all living to-day.

The political factors of the past are no longer the leading ones in the life of nations at the present time. The attachment of the Germans to the head of the Holy Roman Empire died out with the Thirty Years' War. The loyalty of the Austrians for their monarch is still strong, but it is no longer as of yore their only guiding star—not even when backed by Catholicism. Human passions are ever the same, though they run in different grooves: but human institutions, human ideals, these change with the times.

Now, if in the past the history of a great portion of Europe may be fairly identified with the history of one ruling family, such is unlikely to be the case in the near future.

Autocracy in Europe has had its day; modern revolution has rendered this an anachronism. And as if to make its reappearance, even in Catholic countries, doubly impossible, the Catholic Church is no longer to be relied upon as the ally of autocratic monarchy as opposed to the social and political aspirations of communities or nationalities. The expansion of the individual, even when united with a strong feeling of attachment to the Sovereign, has evoked aspirations among the masses which must

lead to acuter perceptions and desires. The growing acuteness of the economical struggle for life has necessitated universal education as a weapon to meet its conditions.

The outcome of this and of many other factors of our day has been a renewal of the feeling of race and nationality, which, though always existent, was formerly forced more into the background by the supreme importance of community of faith or loyalty to a Sovereign. Nowadays the elements of political economy have supplanted the figment of loyalty—even of creed—from the first rank of popular interests. And this remains a fact even where Catholicism—the strongest of all religious creeds—is supreme. Thus we note Protestant leaders controlling a Catholic race agitation in Ireland; Protestant clergymen inciting their flocks in Alsace to remain faithful to the lost connection with Catholic French nationality. So, too, in Austria, we see a rivalry of races, supplanting almost every traditional influence of the past: whilst the Catholic Church marches on amid the *débris* of discarded autocratic shibboleths. The individual is no longer satisfied with the knowledge of being the unit of a great Empire, as is more or less the case for the moment in Germany. The particularism which statesmen have striven to stamp out in Germany, and which has given place to the class war of socialism, is to-day the rising tide in Austria, though its source and character are different. It is not an attachment to a petty Sovereign, as in old-fashioned Germany:

it is democratic, even verging towards republicanism; it has a social tinge as well as a political character. The unit of each community has been taught to ask for something, to strive and to agitate in order to obtain it. He is no longer satisfied with the gratification of his own individual wants. In olden days these were small, and easily supplied. To-day, his energy and ambition are awakened, and with an increasing perception of his scope of mental effort, comes the desire that the political and the economical benefits to be obtained, should become the common property of his class, of his brothers, of his particular nationality. Hence, in the case of Austria-Hungary, composed as it is of a variety of distinct nationalities, a rivalry of race is at work, the course of which will be followed with no ordinary interest by politicians of all countries.

IV

In some recent numbers of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,* M. Anatole de Leroy Beaulieu suggests the possible obliteration of the connection between race, language and nationality, and he instances the Turks, with whom identity of creed is everything, and race and language a secondary consideration. And by way of showing what may be possible under conditions of Asiatic decaying

* "Les Juifs et l'Antisémitisme," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, February 15, May 1, July 15, 1891.

autocracy in the past, the example may stand. But surely M. Leroy Beaulieu would not ask us to believe that what is feasible in Asia could ever be a possibility in Europe. He cannot intend us to believe that it is a matter of detail for the future of a country whether this or that race be on the decline or in the ascendant, and therefore destined to impress its character on the entire community. For when we read the lessons of the past, the interpretation of historical fact points all the other way.

What, we may ask, were the ancient Britons until reinforced by the hardy Norseman, by the Dane and the Saxon? To the blood of those Northmen, who furrowed the German Ocean with their many-oared galleys, a thousand years ago, can in a measure be traced the world colonising power of the England of modern times.

Some of the vicissitudes of modern French history can as clearly be traced to the idiosyncrasies of the Celtic Gaul as observed by Cæsar, as the fixity of purpose of a Richelieu, the ruling qualities of the French nobility through the centuries of the building up of the French monarchic State can be traced to the infusion of the Burgundian, the Frank, and the West Goth blood during and after the *Völkerwanderung* in the fifth century of our era.

And yet the train of thought of M. Anatole de Leroy Beaulieu might lead us to believe, that it were a matter of no moment to the course of the future history of Austria, whether the Turanian Hungarian, the Slavonic Czech, the Teuton, or the Hebrew

should form the future dominant element on the banks of the Danube. Let us for a moment suppose that the majority of Austria's population were thrifty Belgians or hardy Scotchmen. Would anybody aver that this would mean no difference in Austria's political, social, and economical problems to-day? In any case, there can be no doubt that it is a matter of life or death to Austria what race becomes the dominant one in her midst; the result must infallibly decide the lines of her foreign policy in the future, and that in its turn must influence the political future of the Realm of the Habsburgs.

The Habsburgs may broadly be said to have sacrificed the hegemony of Protestant Germany for the sake of Catholicism, and for the sake of those Catholic provinces over which they have ruled so many centuries. Will those elements stand by the Habsburg family in the future?

CHAPTER II

THE GERMANS

Auch über die Hänge der Alpen kreist
Keine Schranke kennend der deutsche Geist

ROB. HAMERLING*

I

THE Germans—at all events those of distinct German race and language—form in Austria-Hungary between nine and ten millions out of the total of forty-one million inhabitants. Thus, numerically, they only take a secondary place among the races of the Empire.

On the other hand, the Austrian Empire is itself a German product. The Habsburg history of the last six hundred years is essentially the history of a German Roman Catholic family and of German Roman Catholic civilisation. Vienna, the capital, was always a German city, from which German university life, laws, institutions, sciences, arts, and customs were promulgated, spread and took effect throughout the Habsburg dominions. The aristocracy, the army, the official world—in one word,

* The spirit of Germany hovers even over the slopes of the Alps, despising all restraint,

the governing influences of the country—were almost entirely German in character, if not also in race.

If Bohemia was once a Slavonic kingdom, so too were large tracts of what now is Prussia once Slavonic in character, even as they are still racially. Bohemia became German by the right of conquest, and remained so unchallenged for centuries. If the Magyars first constituted Hungary as a State, if Latin was the language of culture and officialdom, the Germans founded the towns of Hungary, the social life of her citizens, their commerce and industry. The German origin of many towns in Hungary is shown by their German names: Oedenburg, Stuhlweissenburg, Fünfkirchen, etc. Even the old name of the capital, Pesth, is not a Magyar name, but one of Slavonic root. Indeed, we are told,* that as early as 1240, Pesth was known as a very wealthy "German" town. To-day there is not a town in Hungary which was not at one time entirely or partially inhabited by Germans.†

Transylvania at an early period became a German colony, and is an essentially German province still.

Thus it has come about that Austrian civilisation is almost entirely a product of the Teuton race. It was the Teutonic element which not only founded the Austrian Empire, but provided the grit (*bindende*

* "Ethnographie von Ungarn." Paul Hunfalvy. P. 281. Budapesth, 1877.

† *Ibid.* p. 282.

Kraft) which enlarged, elevated it to its world-dominating position, and held it together amid the vicissitudes of centuries.

And as long as the Habsburgs in person united the titular leadership of the German Empire, nothing seemed to call the legitimate supremacy of the German ruling element into question. It was only in the present century that the racial struggles began, the results of which are still in progress. Their first powerful manifestation was, of course, the Hungarian rebellion of 1848; that, however, Austria overcame with the assistance of Russia. The Slavonic propaganda of the Czechs were still only working silently underground. Thus as long as Austria retained her position as titular head of the Germanic confederation, we find the German race, at all events outwardly, master of the situation.

II

It is only since the final ostracism of the House of Habsburg from Germany and the introduction of Liberalism and the new order of things, that the German element in Austria has been gradually losing the immense political prestige which it formerly enjoyed, and has been thrown back more and more upon its own resources, to stand or fall on its merits; as merits go in such struggles nowadays.

Since that time the German race shows signs of a steady declension. No wonder, then, that there are coteries among the German ruling class of

Austria which still resent the blow dealt them by Protestant Prussia twenty-six years ago.

No sooner had Hungary gained autonomy, than she proceeded to use the very same weapons which the House of Habsburg had used in the past against her. The Magyar tongue became universally obligatory in official life, and everything was done to ostracise the German language by strenuous agitation and other means.* For the Hungarians, in common with the Czechs, are in constant fear that, unless they succeed in extirpating the German language, they will never be safe against the more powerful German volume of culture which finds its way into Austria by means of the universities of Germany proper. And they have both been largely successful in their efforts in this direction. Thus, while in the year 1869 there were still one thousand two hundred and thirty-two German schools in Hungary, now there are only half that number. Ten years ago the German language was still predominant in Budapesth, now only two-thirds of the inhabitants speak it.

The Hungarians have also extended their efforts in the same direction among the German population of Transylvania, and have been indirectly assisted here by the stagnation in the German population of Transylvania. It is said that the Transylvanian

* Germans have repeatedly been fined by the police in Hungary, for drinking to the health of the Emperor of Austria as such.

Saxons have of late years adopted the custom of limiting the family to two children ; the only population of Teutonic race which hitherto has done so.

In the meantime the Czechs of Bohemia and Moravia have not been slow to follow the example set by Hungary, as yet only by tacit agreement among themselves. Even as far back as the year 1872, when Czech hatred of everything German had not reached the pitch it has now attained, many Czechs refused an answer if addressed in German. At present they are eager to possess a law making the Czech language officially obligatory, and if they succeed in this endeavour the use of the German tongue will be still further restricted in Austria. Vienna, once the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, a thoroughly German city, is gradually but surely assuming the character of a Slavonic city. And not only is this the case, but a still surer sign, if possible, is to be found in the decay of German influence ; Vienna is gradually losing much of its former life and bustle, and trade is on the decline. Prague, which since the Thirty Years' War had become as much a German town as Vienna, is to-day Slavonic. And not only in the large towns, but in the rural districts the same influences are at work, narrowing down and superseding the Germanic elements. Even in the south-west, in the Tyrol, the German language is receding before the Italian. Count Wolkenstein, a Tyrolese nobleman, lately asked for a railway ticket at Roveredo

for "Botzen." "We don't know the place," replied the official. "I presume you mean 'Bolzano'?"

Thus while in the east the Hungarians, in the west and south-west of Austria the Slavonic races are respectively making great headway against the only opposing barrier there—what is German. In fact, the elimination and suppression of the German race and language is going on throughout the length and breadth of Austria-Hungary, and the loss of the language goes hand in hand with the loss of old German feeling. Those of German parentage become, with the adoption of another tongue, totally dead to their lost nationality, and often even fanatical adherents of the adopted one.

III

Since the advent of the present Ministry of Count Taaffe, the neglect of German race interests and the suppression of the German language are viewed with favour if not officially encouraged. This is, perhaps, the most ominous sign of all. For if the official world (the Emperor and the Imperial Archdukes at its head), itself largely German, turns against them, it is difficult to see how German interests are to be safeguarded. Still, no official leaning would by itself have been able to bring about the alarming symptoms of the last decennium. In truth, other factors have to be added to account for the results obtained. In the first place, there is the aggressive antagonistic national aspirations

of the other races ; in the second, the activity of the Roman Catholic priesthood ; in the third, the want of political resistive force of the German race itself.

The enmity of the Catholic Church is, both directly and indirectly, at the bottom of almost all the attacks to which the Germans are exposed. The Catholic Church, like Russian diplomacy, never changes its course, and her course in this case means undying enmity to the German element. We may lose sight of questions of race ; not so Rome the Eternal, though to her they may be but means to an end. Monarchy may receive her protection to-day, a Republic to-morrow, a Democracy the day after ; these may pass away, but a race survives. Catholicism knows that of the two, the Slave and the German, the former will be more malleable stuff in his hands than the latter. For the German will sooner or later fall back upon his splendid literature and rebel against the slavery of the mind, irrevocably involved in Roman priest-rule. Hence it is the Catholic priesthood which is trying to stamp out the German schools in the German Tyrol, of which a part belongs to the diocese of the Archbishop of Milan. It is the Catholic priesthood which is doing the same work among the Czech peasantry of Moravia and Bohemia—in fact, everywhere throughout Austria-Hungary.

Lastly, it is the Catholic priesthood which is responsible for the desertion by the great German-Austrian nobility of the German cause. The

Catholic priest influences them through the confessional. By means of his strong hold over the women of the aristocracy, he nurtures a hatred of the German element, particularly of its liberal and Jewish sections. Another strong argument in the hands of the priest in dealing with the aristocracy is, that the Slave is likely to prove more submissive to the territorial supremacy of the aristocratic landowner than the more individualistic German. The aristocracy believe this, but it is possible that a rude awakening may await them. The signs of it are to be gathered from among the young Czechs, who are likely to be socially more iconoclastic in the future than the Germans. It is more than possible that the German aristocracy may find that they have made the same mistake which the German barons of the Baltic provinces made through many centuries, in endeavouring to exterminate the German peasantry. To-day the Russians are about to Russify them !

IV

When we bear in mind that the German language has always been that of the army and of the whole official world, that the culture of the whole monarchy with its German universities, had long been essentially German, it was only to be expected that the great development of local activity in large towns since 1867 would at least strengthen the dominant German element in those towns, whatever might happen in the rural districts ; particularly as the

German language is still obligatory in the whole army. Instead of this, the exact opposite has taken place. A signal proof, too, is here afforded of the weak power of resistance possessed by the German race in Austria. No wonder that the political failings which have characterised Austria in the past, are most strongly typified in the German element to-day ; for they are the direct inheritors of the flabby official past. For the mere mechanical nature of language alone cannot account for such phenomena. Nations have gradually changed their tongue, but retained their characteristics. Where these are strongest the method of expression adapts itself, as is evidenced by the merging of alien colonies in the ruling community without compulsory cause ; thus, instead of endeavouring in the past to coerce other tongues, the Austrians should have gained the mastery of the mind, and the language would have adapted itself.

However much the German may be superior to the Slave or the Hungarian in culture, there seems to be little doubt that, *au fond*, he is inferior to either of them as a *Ἰων πολιτικόν* ; in other words, the German-Austrian, notwithstanding his many excellent qualities, lacks the "grit" of the Prussian. He is lacking in the sense of duty, and the capacity for conscientious hard work and frugality (*Genügsamkeit*) which the organisation of Prussia has instilled into the very bones of its inhabitants.*

* In Germany, a young clerk who has 150 marks a month,

With this exception, he is *à peu près* what many Germans would be to-day but for the iron system that has done them so much good. With all his devotion to his Sovereign, he does not possess the silent energy of self-denial (*verzichterede Kraft*). Even his devotion goes off in transient combustion (*Strohfeuer*) when the moment for action arrives. In the past he was only taught to love and obey; not to think and to work. Thus he possesses, in some ways, a wondrous affinity to the Philistine of the German Fatherland. As a politician, he is given to argue about facts which he has not thoroughly grasped; he unites self-confidence and pessimism in a singular degree.

In fact, the so-called idiosyncrasies of the Austrians, notably those of the Bureaucrat, are largely typical of the German-Austrian element. Foremost among these is a strange inaptitude for hard, crisp thinking, and unreliability in grasping concrete facts; as well as an utter incapacity to act promptly upon them. The shade of Metternich, their last and greatest emasculator, still hovers over them! It is herein that may be found some explanation of the seeming disproportion between their intelligence and their waning political influence. It is want of moral hardness—character, not mere brain sensibility, that weighs down the scale in

saves fifty. If his salary is raised to 200 marks, he will spend an extra ten, and save the rest. In Austria, the same man will at once increase his method of living, on the strength of his larger salary.

some phases of race competition for political supremacy.

V

In this matter of character, the German-Austrian is inferior not only to the Bohemian Czech, but also to the Hungarian. He may speak contemptuously of the stuff (*das Zeug*) of which the other nationalities of Austria-Hungary are composed. He does not, however, himself possess either the cohesion, the strong national and race feeling, or the subordination of his whims and hobbies—in a word, the community of feeling (*Gemeinsinn*)—that characterises the Czech and the Hungarian. The Germans are divided into half a dozen groups,* and are drifting to pieces ever more and more.

The German newspapers in Austria complain bitterly of this state of affairs. All weak elements complain of their weakness. So, too, do the Fins complain that the Russians are effacing their nationality, and so did the Irish ever complain, until they found the means of self-assertion—the secret of baiting the Saxon.

These newspapers reiterate the necessity of furthering the “solidarity of German Austria.” As if any amount of printer’s ink could accomplish

* Their diminishing numbers in the large towns are divided among Liberals, Clericals, Christian Socialists (Anti-Semites), and Conservatives. In the rural districts the great majority of their number (about nine millions) are almost all strongly Clerical, and thus politically reactionary.

that! No, like the German Philistine womanhood which made love to the French prisoners in 1870, the Austrian-Germans lose their heads over the Czech musicians who come to the Vienna Exhibition. And the only return they earn is, that the Czechs tell them plainly: "We have beaten you with whips; wait a bit, we will yet lash you with scorpions."

They are in dire need of discipline, the capacity for sacrifice of time and money, which they see daily brought to bear against them; of that union and the aggressive instinct of battle which animate their opponents as well as the living world at large. Ah, if they possessed all this, joined with true political genius, they would know that, at least as far as the Czechs are concerned, nothing is to be gained by concession. There has ever been a chivalrous instinct among the Hungarians; but the Czechs, like the French and a few others, belong to a race which accepts every concession as a sign of weakness, calling forth, not gratitude or content, but increased demands! Instead of noting all this, they look to Peace Congresses and cheer the amiable platitudes of a Baroness Suttner,* calling upon them to lay down their arms and welcome the millennium, whilst the culture of centuries is being wiped out in some of the fairest lands of Europe. They have not even enough energy left to grumble when they hear that Germans have been punished in Hungary for presuming to drink the health of

* Die Waffen Nieder. Baronin v. Suttner. Dresden : Pierson.

the "Emperor of Austria" (the German monarch, and not the Magyar Kiraly, the king of Hungary).

VI

No wonder a deep-felt pessimism, a feeling as of autumnal desolation, has fallen upon the Germans in Austria. In politics as elsewhere, the biblical warning anent the "sins of the fathers" is apt to prove true. And where there is no faith, not even the grim faith in yourself, there "cometh night in which no man can work," or fight. The Germans in Austria have no faith in themselves or in their leaders, of whom the less said the better. The latter have hitherto been only disintegrating forces. But even if it were otherwise, and they had bold and capable leaders, like those of the Hungarians and the Czechs, it would make little difference. Where the Hungarians and the Slaves would not stop at violence and bloodshed if led up to it, the Germans would in all probability only criticize and slander those who led them.

It is only here and there that a faint gleam is to be met with of that poetic ideality common to all sections of the Teutonic race. It is not among the priest-ridden nobility, but rather among the choice spirits of the hills of Carinthia, Styria and the Tyrol, or from among the best Austrian townsmen, among whom German talent and genius* has so often

* Mozart, Haydn, Grillparzer, Rosegger, and many others may be recalled here.

winged its way, that this sentiment is to be found. Among these are men who grieve at the evil days that have fallen on their race. Something unconsciously tells them that it is not only brawn and muscle, or the profit and loss account at the banker's, that marks the history of mankind; that it is after all the "idea" that lifts the world off its hinges (*aus den Angeln*). Thus it is not that their dividends only bring them $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of 5 per cent.; it is not that their incomes may be diminished or their trade narrowed, that fills them with anxiety; it is that they have somehow imbibed the traditions of a great country of which they and their ancestors formed an integral part for a thousand years: the community of race, of blood!

Some of these men—and women, too—look wistfully over the Austrian borders. They forget the jealous hatred of olden days—the bloody field of Sadowa; their thoughts turn towards the silent, endless fir-trees of Pomerania. There they fancy they see the national hero of their own race roaming in solitude. And the poor Austrian-German—poor in this, though he may have a million at his banker's—feels sick at heart. Perchance some faint friendly echo from those very woods may disturb his reveries. Then his eye moistens, as he exclaims: "A thousand thanks for thinking of me in the sacred woods of Varzin."*

* "Tausend Dank dass Sie in den geheiligten Wäldern von Varzin an mich gedacht."

CHAPTER III

THE CZECH

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other side

SHAKESPEARE

I

AMONG the various races that go to make up the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Slave holds the first place in point of number. Thus, if we take the different groups of the Slavonic race, the Slovaks in Hungary, the Slovenes of Carniola and Dalmatia, the Croats of Croatia, the Czechs of Bohemia and Moravia, etc., we find that they form close upon 20,000,000 out of the 41,000,000 of Austria-Hungary. They form also the most significant element among the races of Austria, inasmuch as they are credited with aims, the realisation of which would ultimately mean the complete disruption of Austria-Hungary as a great Power.

In 1862, the Russian author Turgenieff, writing to a friend, indulged in a pessimistic review of the possibilities of the "poor" Slave. And truly, from

the point of view of culture, many a long day may yet pass before the Slavonic race can offer to its idealistic sons food for optimism. Before culture, however, in the life of all races, comes self-assertion. This must come first, for it is only on the basis of a broad expansive instinct that culture has ever been known to fertilise its healthiest mental produce.

Now the Slavonic race in those parts of Europe that belong to, or are situated in, the vicinity of Austria-Hungary, has already had a great past. The Czechs, also, the most important, and said to be the most gifted of Slavonic tribes, came to Bohemia, which was previously inhabited by Celts, about the year 495 A.D. The king of Bohemia, Ottokar, whom Rudolf of Habsburg slew in battle, was a Slavonic monarch. Again, it was among the Czechs of Moravia and Bohemia that the Reformation first took root in the person of John Huss and in the Moravian Brotherhood. In those days the University of Prague counted 10,000 students. And lastly, it was a learned Czech, John Amos Comenius, who was the founder of the modern school system still in vogue in Austria and part of Germany.

The Thirty Years' War crushed out Protestantism in Bohemia, and almost led to the extermination of the Slavonic race and language. The Protestant nobility were banished, and their estates handed over to the Catholic Church. During a century and a half the language had gradually regained ground, when, in 1774, an Imperial Decree of the Empress

Maria Theresa, making the use of German obligatory in the schools, again retarded its progress.

Still through all this time the Slavonic idea lived on in the heroic traditions of John Huss, Ziska, the two Procops (Generals of the Hussites) and others, who, from having been the leaders of a religious movement, gradually came to be regarded by the populace as the heroes of the race, and are still cherished as such. Here as elsewhere religion has given way to the feeling of race and nationality as the motive force. It was about the year 1848 that the national idea again quickened into more active life, and, since that date, it has made prodigious strides. Thus, while in 1866 there were apparently only 4,680,000 Slaves or Czechs, to-day there are between six and seven millions in Bohemia and Moravia alone, and a similar increase may be noted in other parts of the Empire.

II

Whoever knows what Bohemia was thirty years ago, and compares the racial conditions then with those of to-day, must wonder at the changes that have taken place. The Czech has progressed materially and intellectually in a manner which cannot fail to strike the impartial observer with wonder. Up to the end of the fifties, most of the towns in Bohemia had a decided German character. The better classes almost exclusively spoke German; the schools, the academies, the

theatres, commerce and industry—all these were entirely German. The Czech language was only spoken by the peasant or the villager, or, in the case of the towns, by the working class and domestics. How all this has altered!

In the course of thirty years the Czechs have created a powerful political party, a literature and a musical school of their own. We have it on the authority of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that at the present day their more prominent names in philosophy, theology, and politics are too numerous to be mentioned in detail. In all Slavonic districts a network of savings banks, public credit institutions to advance money to small traders (*Vorschuss Kassen*), co-operative societies and manufactories, has been spread out far and wide. Slavonic schools are everywhere largely attended, commerce and industry are flourishing. In short, the Czechs have everywhere risen to the level of their German competitors.

The Prague Exhibition (1891), which by the short-sighted action of the Austrian-Germans took an essentially Czech character, was visited by hundreds of thousands from all parts of Europe, and was an extraordinary success. At the Musical Exhibition lately held in Vienna, the Czechs were represented by a national theatre of their own, embracing dramatic plays and operas written exclusively by Czech talent, and the success of these was one of the most striking features of the Exhibition. The critic of a Berlin newspaper pays them

the following tribute (referring to the Comédie Française): "The French are old-fashioned (*veraltet*) and were disappointing. The Bohemians are full of the strength and fire of youth, and created the most sensation. The former were not up to their great reputation; the latter, from whom little was expected, did great things."

III

Such successes, however, are of far lesser interest to the foreigner than the political circumstances and the qualities of character that make them possible. Among the former, the breaking-up of the German-Austrian ruling element consummated by the expulsion of Austria from Germany in 1866, occupies a foremost place. To this breaking-up was due the grant of autonomy to Hungary, the full introduction of parliamentary government, and the spread of a national press. That these conditions have also largely increased the scope of the professional agitator goes without saying. Added to the above must be reckoned the strong partisanship of the Roman Catholic Church, referred to elsewhere.

But the qualities of character that enabled the Czechs to take advantage of all this are even more significant. They are active, industrious, and intelligent. As working men, we are assured that they are generally superior to their German conationalists; they are more diligent, more thrifty, and take a greater pride and interest in their work,

whatever it may be. And the same testimony is given of the Czech peasants. These are imbued with a strong national and race feeling. They read the papers, and follow every political development with avidity. They utilise every occasion to make propaganda for their nationality, and are so successful in this at home that many of the present generation of Bohemians whose parents were German, some of them even unacquainted with the Slavonic tongue, notably working men and mechanics, are now thorough-going Czechs.

It is in their political talents, foremost among which are discipline and self-subordination, that the Czechs stand out in most marked contrast and show to advantage as compared with the Germans. The latter hesitate at every step, and are united in nothing. The former attempt everything, and combine to gain politically whatever tends to the furtherance of their interests.* They combine, besides, in social unity of a kind, for while the various classes of their competitors are split up, the Czech, whether he be a noble, a lawyer, a merchant or a mechanic, seems to stand on one supreme level as a nationalist before all things. It is a characteristic as well as a strong feature of the Slavonic race in general, this subordination of class distinction to political aims. In the words of a Russian lady :

* This still remains true in the sense indicated, notwithstanding the recent split between young and old Czechs. The latter—among them the aristocracy—hesitate to go on towards the end ; but the Catholic priest will overcome their scruples,

“With us, if we find you are poor and stand alone, that is reason why we should assist and befriend you, and why we should not cast you off.” This sort of instinct largely permeates the Czechs (even as it does the Jews), and enables them to bring all their might to bear, and to concentrate it between the ribs of their antagonists with the impetus of a steel-pointed spear. Herein lies the power of a young community, which has not had time to dissolve into ridiculous social coteries. And in truth they possess the unscrupulous roughness of a young community, which, as long as the aim in view is the supreme one, is not particular about the nicety of the means. They have not had time to assimilate the deadly virus of calculated hypocrisy, and to employ it; but they would not hesitate to commit deeds of violence, if their leaders were to advise such and saw a prospect of their being crowned by success. At the same time, they are naturally gifted with a goodly portion of cunning,* which they are not above employing in the furtherance of national interests. For instance, Dr. Gregř, the leader of the young Czechs, in a recent speech (November 1891), without stopping to examine what percentage of the taxes referred to were paid by the Germans of Bohemia, told his parliamentary opponents: “It is we who are entitled to speak, not you, for *we* Bohemians contribute more taxes to the revenue

* *Vide* German proverb:

“Sachs und Böhm

Trau, schau, Wem?”

than any other part of the monarchy." So, again, in view of the material progress of Bohemia, and particularly the numerical increase of the Czechs, it seems strange to read in the words of the same speaker (December 1891), that Bohemia had been sucked dry by that vampire Austria. Such, however, are the political weapons of aggressive nationalities generally, and not in Austria-Hungary alone.

And yet in all probability nobody, who knows anything about Austria, will take what is said above in all seriousness. At the same time, it is highly significant of the aims and self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*) of the Czechs. Every dispassionate observer must admit that the Czechs have some reason to trust to their own strong arm, if we gainsay their ideas of justice. They possess strong cohesive power, and their action only shows whither the instinct of race expansion is really tending. It is a manifestation of battle in which the strong only can prevail.

IV

If now we make an attempt to glean what are the true aims of the Czechs, we meet with an ever-enlarging circle of demands. The foremost of these are undoubtedly called forth by the example of Hungary. The Czech leaders are fully aware of the material benefits which a national government is supposed to have brought to the Hungarians, and

their followers are determined to have as much. The first step, then, must be the crowning of the Emperor Francis Joseph in Prague, as King of Bohemia. To justify this demand, the Czechs point to the fact that Maria Theresa was crowned Queen of Bohemia in 1743. They feel that their growing consciousness of nationality warrants their attainment of this, and this therefore they are determined to bring forward and push at all risks and hazards. That is why they now insist that nobody shall hold an official position, even in the German districts of Bohemia, unless able to read and write the Czech language. They are well aware that with this once granted, they will thrust the German element still further to the wall. In fact, they hope to succeed in ultimately destroying the binding force of German bureaucracy in Vienna itself. And here they have the Catholic priesthood on their side, and the greater number of the wealthy Bohemian and Moravian nobility. Indeed, it is peculiar to note, that whereas a few of the Bohemian nobility of Czech descent, such as Count Czernin near Trauttenau, prove the exception by siding with the Germans, the rule is all the other way, even those of German race being distinctly on the national side.

Besides this, the Czechs are aware that their aims are more or less sympathised in by all the Slaves of Austria, forming a far greater percentage of the total population of the monarchy than the Hungarians, and this naturally emboldens them,

No wonder the Czech leaders adopt an aggressive tone, and that Herr Gregr now and then comes within measurable distance of high treason in his passionate orations.

"The majority of the Czech population of Bohemia," he recently said (December 1891), "is utterly wretched in the midst of this alien Empire, and the longing to emerge from their Babylonian captivity has already penetrated into the lowest strata of the Bohemian people. Could the Bohemians of long ago have foreseen what was in store for their descendants, their choice of a king in 1526 would have been very different. Their nationality is oppressed and persecuted in this Austrian State, where violence and tyranny towards all Slavonic races are dominant. The bond between the Crown and Bohemia will be severed if the traditional rights of Bohemia are much longer neglected, and the future relations of the two countries will be those of the conquered towards the conquerors. The Mannlicher rifle will be of little avail in the hands of a people without loyalty and without enthusiasm, but instead of kindling enthusiasm for the State at large by making the Bohemian people contented, they are brought to hate—yes, I say, to hate—this same State. Mark my words, the day of reckoning will come!" And a shadow thereof seems already discernible,

V

The Slavonic Croat, for centuries the truest type of the loyal Austrian soldier, nowadays keeps the picture of the Russian Czar hanging in his cottage. The Catholic priest is no longer there to denounce him and to see that he is shot for high treason, as might have been the case of old. The Roman Catholic, too, shares the sympathies of his Slavonic brethren for those Russians whom, but for other counterbalancing influences, he would be obliged to combat as schismatic Greeks.

This Slavonic and Catholic sympathy for Russia is indeed one of the most extraordinary features with which we have to deal.

In her politics and national poetry alike, this Russia possesses something ungraspable and weird, something recalling the inorganic forces of the earth, the sky, the ocean—of Nature at large. The distant roar of some mighty force yet struggling for outward articulation, or at least as yet imperfectly understood by listeners; yet withal wonderfully disciplined to suffer while advancing as by some natural law.

Silent and slow, yet irrevocably fixed on her onward march, capable as it is of endless self-sacrifice, the great Slavonic power, wedged in on Austria's north-eastern flank, resembles some strange elementary force in what is still a chaotic form. What is it that the Bohemian Czech expects from her? Can it be that the Roman Catholic Church, which is at

the bottom of so much in Austria-Hungary, has here even wider aims in view than those to be realised by Holy Russia? How would it be to unite the whole of the Slaves of Eastern Europe into one Roman Catholic republican conglomeration, crushing dissentient Hungary, and raising the cross of Saint Peter equally against the autocratic Romanoffs of Russia and Protestant Germany? Large views allied to a capacious mouth, wide open, with a glib tongue playing, have before now done big things in politics, and never more so than at present. But the Tarpeian rock was near the Capitol for a thousand years!

Perhaps, however, the Czech may go too far. The intense hatred of the Slaves for their neighbours should not blind them to the fact that the battle of the White Mountain took place but 272 years ago.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUNGARIANS

Extra Hungariam non est vita

POPULAR PROVERB

I

THE kingdom of Hungary, comprising Hungary proper, Transylvania, Croatia and Slavonia, as well as the port and territory of Fiume, embraces an area of about 124,400 square miles, and is thus larger in extent than either Austria, Great Britain, or Italy.

When in the hands of the Romans, Hungary seems to have been inhabited by people of Celtic race. In the fifth and sixth centuries, however, the immigration of peoples (*Völkerwanderungen*) altered its complexion. So thoroughly, indeed, did the Goths, Vandals, Huns and other invaders destroy all remains of previous civilisation, that while in Germany, France, Belgium, and England many towns and rivers bear names of Roman origin, not a single locality in Hungary has a name of Roman derivation.

For a time settlements of Slavonic races seem

to have taken the place vacated by the westward-pushing hordes of Teutons and others; but these, in their turn, were conquered by the Avars, a warlike Asiatic race of horsemen. The latter remained masters of Hungary, and pushed even as far west as Bavaria, until finally subdued by Charlemagne in the year 803.

The first authentic mention of the dominant race in the Hungary of to-day, the Magyars, dates from the year 836, when the Greek writer, Leo Grammaticus, styles them successively by the three distinct names of "Hungarians," "Turks," and "Huns." They are then referred to as encamped on the banks of the Lower Danube. Their origin and early history are alike shrouded in mystery. By language they are distinctly related to the Finns; by race they belong to the Turanian tribes, of which the Turks are representatives. According to a Russian chronicle, they were to be met with as an army of wild horsemen in the neighbourhood of Kiev in the year 898. They seem to have originally come from the plateaux of Asia, and to have established themselves as conquerors in the land which the Avars acquired as above mentioned about the end of the ninth century.

Originally a nomadic people, it is under their first Christian king, Stephen, the Patron Saint of Hungary (997), that they were first organised into a State, possessing permanent institutions, and having a settled form of government. St. Stephen thus may be fairly considered to be the founder of

the Hungarian kingdom and with his reign does her history, properly speaking, begin.

II

The Magyars, although sufficiently numerous for purposes of conquest, were from the first inadequate to fill the expansive provinces which their valour had acquired. Hence foreign elements were introduced, first by compulsion ; later on, as Christianity spread, by invitation and grants of privileges. This policy, which has been persevered in for centuries, is one of the causes of the varied racial character of Hungary as we know it.

For ages the history of Hungary is a bare record of heroic struggle with foreign invasion ; notably that of the Mongolians, who, in the thirteenth century, spread devastation and ruin far and wide. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the country existed as an independent elective monarchy, and under its various dynasties attained a high degree of power and prosperity. Its progress, however, received a sudden check in the year 1526, at the battle of Mohacs, when the Turkish Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, completely annihilated the Hungarian forces. A partition of the country between the victorious Turks and the Austrians followed this disaster, the principality of Transylvania alone being able to retain its independence under elective native dynasties. Since then till now the fortunes of Hungary have been linked with

those of the House of Habsburg, the Sovereigns of which were elected kings of that portion of Hungary which was not held by the Turks.

In 1686, Buda, the ancient capital of Hungary, was wrested from the Infidel, and by the end of the seventeenth century her territory was entirely and finally freed from Turkish dominion.

It was in 1687 that the House of Habsburg succeeded to the throne of Hungary by the right of dynastic inheritance. But even in the days of Habsburg omnipotence the Magyars never really lost sight of their claim to national autonomy; for, in literal harmony with the words of an Austrian law of 1790, *Hungaria cum partibus adnexis est regnum liberum et independans*, we find that which was rudely abolished in 1849 expressly re-established for ever in 1867.

III

In former days, when the Poles were complimented on being the "French of the North," the Hungarians used to be styled the "English of the East." And there are points of affinity enough between the history of the two countries to warrant more than a passing reference to the comparison. No other country* except England can show such an unbroken continuity of constitutional develop-

* See a lecture delivered by Professor Franz. v. Pulzsky in London, entitled "National Life and Thought." Fisher Unwin. 1891.

ment. In no other country except England has a mixed form of government continually prevailed in which the balance of the respective powers of the monarchic, the aristocratic, and the democratic elements—however much it may have fluctuated—has never been irretrievably destroyed.

In England, from the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the country definitively accepted Protestant supremacy, the cause of national independence was always intimately allied to that of liberty. Likewise was it in the case of Hungary. Amid the troubles of foreign invasion, the Reformation spread rapidly over the whole country; imbued all classes of the population, and gave the people a new interest in religion, in education, and in literature. It was the means of keeping alive their national aspirations, the outcome of the traditions of the past, and leavening these with dreams of moral and material progress and spiritual liberty. The spirit of Protestantism is the source of the magnetic power which is enabling Hungary to realise her national dreams. For, at the present time, hemmed in by Catholicism on all sides, the intellectual backbone of the country—the small nobility—is Protestant, and that of a Calvinistic type. The Protestant population of Hungary numbers 3,174,000.

But while in these respects many parallels suggest themselves between the development of Hungary and England, in point of racial temperament there is a strong affinity between the Turanian Magyar and the Celtic Irish. Both possess the

same combination of wild animal spirit, chivalrous courage allied to a tinge of sadness, as is evidenced by their national songs. Both are noted for the same qualities—ardent patriotism, imaginative optimism, and extravagance. The Saxon has long enjoyed a laugh over innumerable funny anecdotes of the one and the other. But in the case of the Hungarians, the laugh has lately been largely on their own side. There is a story told of a Hungarian going into a shop to buy a geographical globe. He tries to find Hungary on it, and when the tiny spot is pointed out to him, exclaims in disgust: "Nonsense; what I want is a globe of Hungary!" *

This little story possesses significance inasmuch as it reflects two leading features of the Magyar character: patriotism and its excess, an exaggerated idea of the importance of his own country, national conceit. Here again is a Celtic quality which we find more fully represented in the French race. This exaggerated notion of theirs may possibly harbour disappointments for the Hungarians in the future; but their energetic patriotism has already produced astonishing results. We need not refer to the uprising of Hungary in 1848, when her heroism excited the admiration of the civilised world. It is enough to note that the kingdom of Hungary is the part of the Realm of the Habsburgs which for years past has attracted most public attention, and that deservedly. For if the Germans

* "Nicht doch, will ich haben Globus von Ungarn."

of Austria may be said to typify the past, the Slaves a possible future, the Hungarians are, politically and economically at least, eminently characteristic of the present day.

IV

We have noted elsewhere the part which the Germans played in the making of Hungary. The Magyars are now the ruling race, and although they only form at the very utmost forty-eight per cent.* of the seventeen million inhabitants of the kingdom of Hungary and its appendages, their will is supreme, and their energy in national, political, and economical matters something astonishing. What makes this perhaps all the more surprising is, that the Magyar is said to be deficient in many qualities to which we are accustomed to look as guarantees of worldly success in every-day life ; notably, thrift, industry, so-called conscientious right-mindedness, with an added sprinkling of canting hypocrisy. The lack of the latter explains why the frankly aggressive egotism occasionally offends sensitive outsiders. The Magyar is wanting here all along the line. He is pleasure-loving ; the oppressive heat in the summer makes him disinclined for persistent effort, and somewhat of a spendthrift. He has even been typified as a man holding a bottle of champagne in one hand,

* According to the *Almanach de Gotha* (1892), only about six millions in the whole of the Hungarian monarchy speak the Magyar tongue.

and a promissory note in the other. And yet he has a record of national self-assertion, and, within the brief space of one generation, has achieved an opening up of the material resources of the country which may well call forth both envy and admiration. The world has been accustomed to marvel at the growth of trans-oceanic communities. Hungary, however, can show an almost equally remarkable spectacle. Here is a great country of the past, in which national independence had been forfeited two hundred and fifty years prior to the collapse of Poland, and which continued to exist at one time as a Turkish province, at another as a portion of Austria, but which suddenly becomes endowed with new life, makes peace on equal terms with its conqueror, and rises up again a new nation. In the course of a short space of twenty-five years, this people succeeds in creating commerce and manufacture, a network of railways, a thorough system of public education, a national school of literature, science, journalism,* drama,† painting and music. These, and many other things besides, have the Hungarians succeeded in bringing to life, mainly by the force of national enthusiasm. Other factors as well have, of course, been at work. In the first place, the bounteous hand of Nature herself has

* They had almost to create a language of journalism for themselves.

† Budapesth possesses four theatres in which the Hungarian language is used, against two in which the performances are in German.

given her in the Danube a river similar to what the Mississippi is to North America. Then, again, she is possessed of a soil, the fertility of which qualifies her to be the granary of Europe; though against this must be placed the excess of heat, and consequently recurring disastrous droughts and floods.

In the second category of causes of Hungary's flourishing state (*Emporblühen*) must be placed the removal of the deadening hand of Austria. The protective commercial policy of Austria, notably that of Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II., practically cut Hungary off from the rest of the world, and made her economical development impossible. These impediments, however, are now removed; and the new commercial treaty of Austria with Germany must result in a further material increase of prosperity for Hungary, particularly when the canal between the Danube and the Oder and Elbe is made complete, and Hungarian grain can find its way to the sandy north at nominal freights. This and many other movements inevitably point to the transferment of Austria's centre of gravity to Budapesth. But more than any treaties, the qualities of the Hungarians themselves are likely to ensure this consummation. And it is of these that we wish to treat, for, beside his defects, the Magyar possesses some very strong qualities. We need only take a glance at Budapesth, the beautiful capital, to recognise this; for, if the Hungarian is, as stated, averse to work, he

must at least possess the talent to make others work for him, this greatest necessary gift of our time, to have achieved such a splendid result in so short a space. To this outward tangible result must be added one of still greater significance—namely, the enthusiasm which the Magyar nationality seems able to inspire in others. The German and the Jew gladly exchange their nationality for that of the Magyar, and in 1848 the Jews were devoted adherents of the cause of Hungary, as they have since remained.

V

What strikes us, perhaps, most forcibly in Hungary, is the union of all classes alike in action and striving in the pursuit of common aims. While in the past, when the Germans were the ruling element, there was continual bickering and jealousy between the town population, the peasantry, and the landed nobility (in France the convulsion of the Revolution ended by the extirpation of the old French nobility), in Hungary, peasant, townsman, and Hungarian magnate are all at this day harmoniously and enthusiastically allied in the furtherance of the same national endeavours. If any qualification is necessary to this, it is at most as to "how far" they wish to go, not a question of difference of principle or antagonism of class interests. Most interesting to us in England is this at the present time, when our democracy is more or less indifferent to the possession of India,

which it looks upon at most as a gigantic institution of out-door relief for the sons of the upper classes.

To the attainment of this strong unity of purpose, the Hungarian aristocracy contributed their share in a manner which will make their high-minded patriotism stand out for all time as a subject for admiration. The share of the Hungarian aristocracy in the national uprising of 1848-9, and in its disastrous results—ruin and death by bullet or the common hangman—these are matter of history. Less generally appreciated, however, are the results of this community of all classes in the shambles and on the scaffold; for the memory of it undoubtedly acts as a strong bond of union between them.

Down to the year 1848 the nobility of Hungary enjoyed the same privileges which they possessed in the Middle Ages. It is a significant feature in the history of Hungary, however, that while the hard feudal condition of life which existed elsewhere in Europe never held sway in Hungary, the common man always had a higher status than elsewhere, although up to our time the peasant in Hungary has remained stationary in the same rank which he occupied in the past.

In 1848 the Hungarian nobility,* under the

* The term of nobility includes here the class which we in England call landed gentry. The only privilege which the nobility retained almost unchanged was the right of the "Magnates" to form the Upper House—the "Table of the Magnates."

inspiration of Count Szechenyi, Franz Deak, Koloman Tisza (to-day ex-Minister) and others, came to the conclusion that their ancient class privileges only meant stagnation for the country at large, and made all ideas of progress illusory. They were eager to create and foster enthusiasm among the people for the broader idea of a national existence, and, rising above class selfishness, they led the way by abolishing their own privileges.

And in acting thus, in yielding up their enormous privileges of their own accord, without pressure from below and in spite of opposition from above, the Hungarian nobility, strange as it may appear, so strengthened their social and political position in a moral sense, that to-day, merely by the force of tradition, it has remained almost the same as it was formerly by force of law. The nobility is now essentially what it ever was, the main constituent part of the public and official life of the country.*

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coronation of the Emperor of Austria, the *Vienna New Press* (5th May 1892) paid the Hungarian nobility the following tribute:

“An aristocracy which is in no need of material aid, possessed of a spirit of independence, and educated in a broad conception of national rights, never placed itself in opposition to the people, nor


* Der Adel in Ungarn. Johann von Asboth.

nurtured any class hatred, but always stood in the full vitality of the present."

Again, unlike the nobility of Germany, all the political talent of the Hungarian nobility is enlisted on the side of the people; they do not form a coterie among themselves, but belong promiscuously to every party.

The aristocracy of Hungary offers the most pregnant contrast to the Sarmatian nobility of Poland, which by its impoverishment and gradual extinction is now paying for the sins that brought about the ruin of that once powerful kingdom. No amount of belated heroism in the field could in truth suffice to atone for the class selfishness and political incapacity of the aristocracy which were so conspicuous in Poland's miserable history.

In taking note of the political virtue of the modern Hungarians, it is well to bear in mind that the Hungarian nobility has ever been distinguished by the possession of marked political talent. Thus, as early as the year 1223, within three years of the granting of our Magna Charta, we find them originating in the Golden Bull a similar charter to that which safeguarded the liberty of the subject in England—a constitutional guarantee exacted from King Andreas the Third. Its main provisions concerned the liberty of the people: the inviolability of property, and the right of the subject to petition the Sovereign for redress of wrongs. Other provisions applied to the right of the nation to oppose the wishes of the monarch,



should these be in controversion to the law of the constitution. Even now the king of Hungary, in the person of Francis Joseph, takes his oath of fidelity to the Golden Bull of 1223. And, indeed, as early as the year 1505, we find the aristocracy insisting on the responsibility of Ministers, which is to-day common to all constitutional countries.

Bearing all this in mind, then, it is not surprising that those who know best have a very high opinion of the political talents of the Hungarians, and of the possibilities which the future may have in store for them.

VI

It seems to us to be a good augury for the political future of the Hungarians, that, although modern parliamentary institutions came suddenly upon them, they have shown strong signs of understanding how to work them, instead of being worked by them.

The fact of the matter is, that this people, in pursuance of their national aims, combine so-called liberalism with a deal of the method of paternal government. And the results have exceeded every expectation in stimulating activity and production in every conceivable direction. They already show us what a numerically small practical people, who pull in one direction, can achieve in material and political progress.

The Dual Monarchy had hardly been established on its present basis in 1867, when the Hungarians

gave proof that they were well able to take care of their interests in more ways than one.

The Government wanted money. The Austrian-Hungarian Empire had none. Germany was not likely to respond very liberally. What was to be done? Why, work on public opinion elsewhere. Now this occurred at the time when the French were very tired of American (read Mexican) investments. Fortunately, the construction of the Suez Canal turned the eyes of the French investing public eastward! Hungary is also in the East. The Suez Canal will bring figurative grist to the mills of Hungary! Thus argued the wily Hungarians; and the way they succeeded in convincing the French investor of this reflects the highest possible credit on them, and adds one more cogent reason for believing in their political future.

The leading organs of the Paris press were "given to understand," that in proportion to their influence and circulation a certain percentage of the Royal Hungarian Loan would be placed at their disposal. Thus began one of the most amusing episodes of baiting the many-headed beast that the record of publicity can show. The French public were suddenly "encouraged" to take an abnormal interest in Hungary, a country the resources, even the geographical position, of which the average Frenchman was probably less acquainted with than with those of Cochin China! The *Figaro* brought a series of highly coloured descriptions of the social aspect—the charm of Hungarian life. The serious

Temps followed suit with a compilation of rose-tinted statistics, showing the wonderful economic possibilities of the Magyar kingdom, designed, as if by Providence, as the most suitable repository for the hard-earned savings of Jacques Bonhomme and Joseph Prudhomme. Thus were the changes dexterously rung throughout the gamut. And the result was a most successful floating of the Hungarian loan on the Paris money market!

No doubt it was only fear of Russia that prevented Austria from joining in the war of 1870, and equally sure is it, that had she done so the national bankruptcy of Hungary would have followed as a matter of course, and added the Hungarian millions to those of Panama. Such considerations, however, are in no way calculated to lessen our admiration of Hungarian astuteness in this business.

VII

A far more difficult task awaited the leading minds of Hungary in the matter of parliamentary government.

From having formed part of the most grandmotherly State in Europe, the Hungarians suddenly found themselves in possession of an amount of liberty almost bordering on license. They now possess complete freedom of the press, freedom in all forms of co-operative association, political meeting and individual enterprise, and an extension of

the franchise tantamount to manhood suffrage. Surely this is liberty enough to favour the growth of the toadstool of selfishness, of vanity and conceit ; liberty enough to encourage any amount of shrieking for "rights" and silencing every call for self-denying duty ! And this with a frontier exposed on every side ! As if, too, so much liberty were not in itself sufficient to tax their best energies, they have from the first had a hidden relentless foe in the priesthood of Rome. Be this as it may, however, they still look as if they could ride safely at anchor amid it all—a splendid testimony surely to their political ability.

At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the Hungarians started with many practical advantages on their side. One of these—the community of feeling between all classes—we have already described.

Besides that, however, the very blank of their past has been of great moral advantage to them. Few crying injustices, few striking anomalies, few vested interests, either in land, in drink, or in law, exist ; no class privileges have survived the sweeping innovations of the Revolution of 1848. Thus Hungarian legislators could come before the country with clean hands ; equality for all before the law was not a phrase, but a reality. Instead of a barren policy of negation, instead of a half-hearted righting of wrongs, they could make a fair start with measures for the benefit of the community at large. Foremost among these came measures for

a beneficial subdivision of the land wherever practicable; energetic taxation of land, which had formerly been totally exempt from every contribution; protection against commercial fraud, bogus companies, etc. Measures, too, were passed against every form of modern filth and license, such as the spread of drunkenness, betting and adulteration, etc. etc.

In the attainment of these ends there was no social servility to conquer; the dread word "competition" had not yet had sufficient play to accentuate unduly the spirit of abject prostration of the poor before the rich. Nor also had privilege and beggary, pauperism and charity, time to sap the independence of character of large classes of the community.

VIII

With these positive and negative advantages in hand, the Hungarians proceeded to work out parliamentary government. Being a young country, the beginning was naturally characterised by the boisterous roughness of youth. Thus we read that the Hungarian elections are still attended with brutal savagery—that people on such occasions are killed and wounded, in out-of-the-way places. We must not, however, forget that when England was fighting the world and building up the Colonial Empire which belts the globe, our parliamentary elections produced periodical crops of broken pates

and damaged limbs all over the country. Bearing this in mind, we must not be too hard on Hungarian electoral enthusiasm. It will be for the future to prove whether a few broken heads or a meek electorate, pledging its candidates to female suffrage, is the healthier omen.

In the meantime, it is undoubtedly a good sign of the political earnestness of a country, when peasants are said to travel thirty miles to record their votes. This surely is, from a parliamentary point of view, a more promising outlook for a backward country than are the complaints we read of elsewhere, particularly in Germany, regarding the apathy of the electorate.

The Hungarian electors require educating before they become capable of insisting on pledges and able to choose the mealy-mouthed huckster to redeem them. As yet their only ken is the capability of discerning broader aims of patriotism.

It is within the walls of parliament itself, however, that the Hungarians appear to the greatest advantage. There they show qualities, notably common sense, which prove them to be born parliamentarians in the best sense of the term.

They have little belief in empty words. Thus, some years ago, when a member exclaimed, "Yes, I am a Republican," the whole assembly burst out laughing. By nature passionate and impulsive, they have introduced an honest business-like sobriety into their language, which is as striking as it is impressive. Nor have they patience with fads,

crotchets, and empty party cries. They would even scorn to pledge themselves to vote in accordance with such. It is therefore not surprising that they do not for a moment take the parliamentary windbag at his own valuation. He is laughed at or sat upon, and sometimes exploded altogether.

Should a parliamentarian, however, add hypocrisy to his "windiness," it becomes a serious matter. The cant of "conscientious scruples," the "all-importance of principle," and the "insignificance" of the speaker's personality, being "open to conviction," but only after "careful weighing of evidence,"—all this, instead of exciting admiration, provokes deadly animosity. "How are we to hold up our heads," they say, "and face our national foes in the hour of danger, if we allow unscrupulous politicians of this stamp to demoralise us with their hypocrisy?" For, strange to say, the Hungarians are afraid of becoming infected by the devilry of falsehood. This hot-blooded but primitive people on such occasions lose all control of themselves. They do not babble about fighting elections with a glib tongue, but they endeavour to provoke the hypocrite to deadly combat with sword or pistol, and if possible to send him into everlasting retirement. Hungary, in her precarious condition, cannot afford to allow such noxious weeds to flourish. The Hungarians may be primitive in the method adopted for their eradication, but there can be no doubt as to the soundness of the principle involved.

IX

The power of wealth and patronage and so-called social influences go for very little in parliamentary life in Hungary. Membership is not a stepping-stone to social recognition: men of the stamp that are elected in Hungary possess social standing which satisfies them without it. There is a tacit Freemasonry among Hungarian members, inasmuch as from the Ministers down to the most insignificant member of the House they address each other in the familiar "thou"; but this is merely a conventional form which enhances mutual good-feeling, and never leads to undue familiarity, for the educated Hungarian is a gentleman by instinct. The Hungarian member of parliament, moreover, always retains his independence, because of his not being an office-seeker or ambitious of titular distinction.

It is a strange feature of parliamentary life in Hungary that there is no opposition which endeavours to turn out the Government and take its place. At least such a thing as a change of Government, in the sense in which we understand it, has not taken place since Hungary acquired an independent legislature. Hence there exists no motive for one party to continually question the purity of conduct and principle of their opponents. Hence too they have not yet come to practise a policy of "office at any price." An unpopular personage retires and another takes his place, that is all; for the main body have the same aim—the good of their

country. The political huckster is as yet an unknown feature; the rich man, who subscribes funds to help to turn out a party and earn a trumpety title in exchange, has hitherto not shown himself.

The capitalist is, it is quite true, utilised—nowhere is he “worked” more effectually; but neither the Government nor the members in general allow themselves to be swayed by him. Were the wealthy landowner to ask compensation for public improvements which increase the value of his property, he would be ridiculed. As for the sinecurist, the brazen parliamentary beggar, the cunning little self-seeker, the small-brained scion of the aristocracy—these have in parliamentary Hungary but little scope, and at most an uncertain, obscure position. “Brandy” and the liquor interest generally have little influence there.

The Hungarians have been on the look-out for strong, honest men to do their work, and in their efforts to find such they have been fairly successful. The array of eminent names the Hungarian parliament can show during the last twenty-five years would do honour to the oldest established national House of Representatives. There is Koloman Szell, who was Minister of Finance at the same age as Pitt. There is Count Julius Szapary, who has been Minister of Finance and is now Prime Minister. There is Koloman Tisza, one of the strong men of Hungary, who for ten years was an all-powerful Prime Minister.

There is Count Alexander Carolyi, a man of princely fortune and estate, who, disdaining to take his seat in the Upper House, has entered the arena where no privilege of birth can assist him. And lastly, there is the recently deceased Gabriel von Baross. Such are a few of the men who have done good parliamentary work in Hungary. And they have had their hands full !

X

One of the most striking features of Hungarian legislation has been that connected with industry, commerce, and the opening up of railroads, etc. And here, somehow, this passionate, excitable Asiatic race has got hold of the sober utilitarian watchword of our time—"competition." The Magyars are determined "to compete" all along the line. And their efforts in this direction prove them to be no unworthy rivals, much less servile imitators, of more phlegmatic races. Nay, on the contrary, they even excel among their competitors. From being shut out from the markets of the world, they have come to compete successfully with the world at large. How they managed to do this is, indeed, an instructive page in contemporary history.

In the first place, the Magyars, hand in hand with the Jewish element in their midst, are an eminently practical people. They instinctively discovered for themselves the cardinal truth, which

was only revealed to us by Professor Bryce, that "nothing is more pernicious in politics than abstract doctrines."

They have not been slow to rid themselves of theories, and to face the concrete fact that even without powder and shot there is war, unrelenting war, ever going on in the world. At the present day it is the war of freights, tariffs, and prices. And the Hungarians are determined to have their fair share of the spoil in this warfare, though it be only in the economic form of florins and kreuzers. They set to work accordingly to find a man who could assist them in this; and they found him in the late Minister of Commerce, Gabriel von Baross, the typical Hungarian national politician. Born in the momentous year 1848, of humble parentage, Baross studied law and drifted into journalism. Elected for parliament, he became Secretary of State at the age of thirty-five, and at thirty-eight full Minister. Of singular force of character, arbitrary or pliant as circumstances dictated, he was a man of boundless resource and herculean powers for work. Exacting towards himself, never taking an hour's holiday, he demanded the same of his subordinates. He found the railway system of Hungary in hopeless disorder, and set to work to put it right. No vested interests were allowed to stand in the way of what he recognised to be an essential condition of national growth and prosperity. He discerned that it was of the first importance to develop the means of communication of the country, in order that the

people might be able to wage the economic warfare, advantageously "fighting light." He was intimately acquainted with railway matters in other countries, and had heard that the exorbitant freights of English railway companies were choking the agricultural produce markets in England to such an extent that foreign fruit was being imported, whilst the home article was actually rotting in the orchards which produced it. Further, he had heard that the English passenger world is still paying interest, on the £60,000,000 given by the railway companies as compensation to English land-owners for trespassing on their property and increasing its value, and that the English parcel post, and even the letter post in some places, has to be served by mail-coaches because the railway monopolists will not carry them at reasonable rates.

Such were some of the abuses from which Baross determined that Hungary should be spared; and the result has been the so-called Zone tariff,* and the cheapening of freights to such an extent that Hungary, which twenty-five years ago could only show 1400 miles of railway, to-day possesses 7000 miles (4000 belonging to the State) as well as the cheapest railway rates in Europe.

But railway reforms by no means exhausted the energies of G. von Baross. He was an enthusiastic furtherer of home production. To him also are, in

* See "Special Inquiry into the Zone Railway System." Glasgow: Hedderwick & Sons. 1890.

a measure, due the introduction of the Postal Savings Banks, the recent treaties of commerce, as well as a deal of the social legislation of Hungary.

In short, Baross may be said to have literally consumed himself in the service of his country. Although only forty-four years of age when he died last May, his name had attained eminence even outside Hungary. The occasion of his death was one of national mourning throughout the country, the Emperor of Austria (king of Hungary) himself taking the lead in the expression of his deep sympathy.

XI

Opinions are somewhat divided as to the correct value of the reformatory labours of Gabriel von Baross. The more so, as his revolutionary reforms, and those of his immediate predecessors, could never have been carried through except at the price of great sacrifices from many legitimate vested interests. In his enthusiastic cheapening of freights, in his encouragement and assistance of native industries, he went a long way on the road toward State Socialism. The results, however, cannot be said as yet to have come up to expectations. Many are of opinion that they have only served to bring into relief the "over-haste" and "unripeness," the want of persistent effort, which still largely characterises Hungary, intellectually * and economically.

* The number of those who cannot read and write in Hungary is larger than in any other part of the Dual Monarchy.

Be this as it may, the importance of Herr von Baross to us is, that he concentrated and typified in his person the virtues and aspirations of the latter-day Hungarians: burning patriotism, restless energy, free from all mean personal self-seeking egotism; self-denial and self-sacrifice, devoted to the furtherance of a noble object.

A most significant and hopeful feature to us is the enthusiasm which a bit of genuine "character" seems able to call forth in Hungary. Even the town corporations of Croatia—a country which stands in about the same relation to Hungary as Ireland does to England—joined in the mourning for the death of Baross. This man had been neither a popularity hunting demagogue, nor one whom vanity, even when ministered to by royalty itself, moved one hair's breadth from pursuing what he believed to be the sum of his life's work. Strength of character and zeal for the material progress of his country distinguished him in the eyes of his fellows, and in our opinion the impulse his example has furnished to his countrymen will beneficially outweigh any of the shortcomings or fallacies inherent in his feverish legislative activity. Of one thing there can be no doubt, that if Hungary had been forced to depend on the class of politicians who only take the initiative in more advanced communities, where the intolerable pressure of public opinion forces them to act, she would not hold the political position or enjoy the economic prospects she has. These possible "prospects" stamp Hun-

gary as an Eldorado for the adventurous agricultural emigrant with capital. But he must be ready to work, as he is forced to work in America and the British colonies. Unfortunately, there is something in the very air and climate of Hungary which, whilst it lends to life the charm of floating on a sunbeam, soon subjects the hardiest foreigner to the weird intoxicating influence of the passionate and yet dreamy, work-killing sounds of the Czardas.

Who shall say that the future of this people will not manifest what the present seems to foreshadow? Much may be expected of this mysterious, and still almost unknown, half-Asiatic race. It unites with many splendid qualities a keen utilitarian level-headedness, an eagerness to go ahead—to overcome every obstacle to its self-assertiveness. Yet there is a dread shadow cast upon its future, for a mighty race looms amid the gloom of Hungary's snow-tipped hills. Of this the Hungarians can never lose sight, nor are they likely to forget soon the mournful day of Vilagos.*

* Identified with the collapse of the national rising of 1849. At Vilagos, the Hungarian army under Görgei surrendered to the Russians, 13th August 1849.

CHAPTER V

THE JEW

Naturam expellas furca ; tamen usque recurret

HORACE

I

RUSSIA, Germany and Austria, when they dismembered Poland and divided it among themselves, took over the nucleus of its present large Jewish population. For Poland had long been the favourite resting-place of the Semitic race in Europe, driven thither from the West by mediæval persecutions in Germany, France, and elsewhere.

There would, indeed, seem to be a touch of the Nemesis of history in the fact that nowadays the Jews threaten to compete for intellectual and material supremacy in Russia, in Germany, as well as in Austria.

Under the early Romanoffs, the Jews were forbidden to reside in Russia. To-day the Polish Jews of Russia have spread far and wide through the dominions of the Czar, and are said to number from four to six millions of souls.

So enormous has been the increase in the Jewish race in Europe during the present century, that Germany alone possesses a greater number of Jews than did the kingdom of Poland at the time of its first partition ;* at which time Poland contained more Jews than the rest of Europe combined.

But Austria-Hungary is the country in which, next to Russia, the heritage of Poland has resulted in the greatest increase in the Jewish population. When the Emperor Francis the First arrived at Lemberg, the capital of Austrian Poland, for the first time, he was so struck by the number of Jews that he called out to his suite: "Now I know why I hold the title of 'King of Jerusalem.'"† And verily in modern times there is no country in the world where the Jews form so influential a body as in Austria-Hungary. As the life of the country concentrates itself more and more in the great towns, the Teuton, the Slave, and the Hungarian find a tougher competitor in the Israelite.

It was only as recently as 1867 that they first obtained equal political rights ; and yet already it is impossible to treat of the country ethnologically, psychologically, or economically without taking into account the Jewish elements to be found there. Their astonishing increase in numbers, as also in

* The official census of Poland and Lithuania of 1772 gives the total Jewish population at 308,500 souls. Germany to-day has 600,000 Jews.

† The Emperor of Austria holds, among his other titles, that of "King of Jerusalem."

influence and wealth, throws the strongest light on the political and intellectual weakness, or rather want of resisting power, on the part of the Austrians, be they considered as a race or as a conglomeration of races. The power of the Jews in Austria affords us, by reason of the antagonism it encounters everywhere, an exact scale by which to measure the inertia of the Austrian in competing with them in the battle of life of the nineteenth century.

From an economic point of view, too, the Jew is the most significant factor in Austria-Hungary; for while other race struggles may affect Austria-Hungary's political future, the Jewish element is threatening in course of time to transform her both economically and socially.

The following figures will give some idea of the proportion and growth of the Jewish population of Austria-Hungary.

According to the census of 1880,* among a total population of 37,786,346, Austria-Hungary counted 1,643,708 Jews,† of which 641,000 fall to Hungary alone. One hundred thousand of these latter belong to the capital, Budapesth; forming one-fifth of its total inhabitants.‡ But these figures

* The census of 1890 for Hungary is not yet accessible.

† The full significance of these figures will be best understood when we bear in mind that in 1848-49 there were, according to the *Almanach de Gotha*, only 746,891 Jews in the whole country. In 1864 this number had risen to 1,121,000 (683,000 in Austria, 428,000 in Transleithania, Hungary).

‡ Since the Hungarian Edict of Tolerance of the Jews of 1872 the Jews have swarmed to Budapesth. In the year 1842 there

by no means exhaust the presence of the Jewish race in Hungary. For it is a well-known fact, that about 25 per cent. of the Jews in Hungary have gradually become Hungarians, and adopted names of Magyar character: these do not figure in the statistical columns as Jews at all. The fact of the Hungarians being themselves of Asiatic origin and also largely of the Protestant faith, is said to have facilitated this process, which elsewhere the Catholic Church does all in its power to prevent.

That this increase of the Jews in Hungary is evidently destined to become still greater, is proved by the statistics of births and deaths. Whereas in the years 1866-70 the average surplus of births over deaths in Hungary was 17 per cent., among the Jews it amounted to 49.30. There is no reason to suppose that this proportion has materially altered since.

According to the census of Austria proper of 1890, out of a population of 23,895,000, there were 1,143,000 Jews. There are upwards of thirty synagogues in Prague alone.

While in the year 1857 there were only thirty-two Jews for every thousand inhabitants of Vienna, in the year 1890 this proportion had risen to one hundred and twenty-two. According to the census of the latter year there were 118,495 Jews in Vienna out of 1,214,363 inhabitants. In the same year

were only 7586 Jews living in Pesth, which was then distinct from Buda, the other half of the town on the opposite bank of the Danube.

fifty-five Catholics went over to Judaism in Vienna! In one district of the city alone (Leopoldstadt) there are at present 49,098 Jews against 104,934 Roman Catholics: nearly as many as in the whole of Great Britain. Close upon five hundred entries in the Vienna Postal Directory answer alone to the name of Kohn. These figures, taking an average of five to represent a family, would mean that there are two thousand five hundred Jews in Vienna bearing the name of *Kohn*.

Even these imposing statistics, however, do not, nor would the aggregate of their wealth, convey a full idea of the relative preponderance of the Jewish race in Austria-Hungary.

II

The intellectual grip of the Jews in the Austrian Empire is even more surprising than the accumulation of their wealth and the variety of their occupations. To begin with, although in number they only form about five per cent. of the entire population, their proportional number at the Austrian universities in 1887-88 was 19.3 per cent.* Once started in life, these nineteen per cent. infuse into every branch of the professions, leaving the gross of the Jewish population to grapple with the sadly incompetent Austrian in the field of speculative commerce and manufacture.

* There were 15,362 students at Austrian universities in the winter of 1887-88.

In Germany the Jew is almost, though not quite, as powerful in finance and in commerce as in Austria, but he is rarely met with as a manufacturer; the control of labour and the slow mechanical method of making money by manufacturing being perhaps the vocations for which the Jew is least fitted. In Austria, however, he is omnipresent even as a manufacturer. This fact is, perhaps, the most crushing indication of Austrian incapacity to wage the battle of modern life on equal terms with the tougher Oriental.

In the communal schools of Vienna (*Städtische Volksschulen*) in the year 1890-91, among 42,624 boys there were, roughly speaking, 5600 Jews. Now whereas there were at the same time 6274 pupils at the technical schools (*Gewerbe-schulen*), drawing their pupils from the communal schools, there were among these only 110 Jews. This shows distinctly how small is the percentage of Jews who think it worth their while to take to the humbler vocation of learning a handicraft, as distinct from a trade.

The Jews are all-powerfully represented in every walk of life which leads to influence, money-making, and "getting on" generally. Everywhere their influence is out of all proportion to their representative numbers, large though it be, both in the liberal professions of law, medicine and literature, and in commerce and industry. They are to be found dominant in all the large urban centres of political life and commerce, as well as in the rural

centres of agriculture. They rule the markets, are at the head of finance, and, except in the case of the Czech, direct public opinion. The produce Exchange, and, of course, the Bourse, at Vienna, Prague or Budapesth, are deserted on Jewish holidays. Jewish syndicates of bankers in Vienna are said to hold mortgages over most of the land of Hungary. All the railways which do not belong to the State are controlled by them. Numberless manufacturers could not carry on their business at all, but for the accommodation afforded them by Jewish bankers.

As for public opinion, as expressed through the medium of the press, with the single exception already mentioned, it is the Jew who speaks in the name of the people, be it the Hungarian or the German. Notwithstanding the aggressive national consciousness of the Hungarian, whenever this sentiment finds expression, it is in all probability through the pen of a Jew. So, too, if an emperor, a statesman, or a great soldier die, it is a Jew who prepares the necrological notice setting forth the virtues of the deceased to public appreciation. On occasions of great Roman Catholic festivals, such as Whitsuntide, Easter, etc., it is again a Jew who celebrates the occasion with a leading article and tells the good Christians to behave themselves as such; often with quotations from the Bible. Thus, on the recent occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Covenant between Austria and Hungary, the *Vienna New Free Press** aptly concludes a highly optimistic

* June 5, 1892.

leader with the following quotation from the Acts of the Apostles, chap ii. verse 1: "And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all with one accord in one place."

III

The foregoing leaves no room for doubt, that in the battle of life, as it is now waged in Austria-Hungary, the Jews are undoubtedly the victors, and are likely to remain so. And when we come to consider the prejudice and hatred they have had, and still have, to encounter, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that their fighting powers must be such as are likely to make their superiority in the future proportionate to the geometrical square of the development of their wealth and number. It is but another case of the figurative snowball.

It follows, moreover, that being alien in race and the object of our dislike, and thus only able to succeed in the rivalry of daily life in spite of us, their success is the exact measure of our weakness, whether it be social, political, or economical.

In Austria this weakness is partly political, though chiefly commercial, economical, as has already been pointed out. For socially Austria is still true to its standard and will have none of the Jew, and, with very few exceptions, keeps him outside its circle, whatever be his wealth.*

* In countries in which society deserts its traditional landmarks, the Jew, although perhaps disliked, becomes in virtue of his money all-powerful as a leader of society.

All this becomes the more significant as regards the future when we bear in mind that, unlike the Jews in France, England, America and Germany, the greater number of the Austrian-Hungarian Jews are still huddled together in poverty in the eastern provinces of Galicia and in the wilds of Hungary.* Thus it is as yet only the *élite*, a small minority of the Jews, who have achieved so much. If their success continues, they are evidently destined to form a large percentage of the aristocracy of the country, notwithstanding every opposition. Nor do we see how this could well be otherwise. For the aristocracy of to-morrow must be merely the representatives of the most clever, the most successful, in all walks of life. The most successful, the best—*οἱ ἀριστοὶ*—of the past were in reality only those who were most distinguished in war, character, ability, and intellect—the best-balanced heads—the strongest. To-day there is war still, only it is of a different kind. Its character is economical; its prizes, millions; its defeats, poverty.

Thus excellence in the art of money-making is the largest and most important attribute of every conception of the best: the most seaworthy in the storms of modern life. And it looks very much as if in time to come it would be the only attribute necessary, not in Austria alone, but all the world over.

* Though yearly an increasing contingent is moving up westward to swell their victorious ranks in the capital.

IV

It is this strength of the Jew and this weakness of the Austrian that are largely, if not entirely, at the root of the hatred and slander of which the former is the object. The weakest Christians are those who slander the Jews most; they cannot realise that slander is no logical attribute of dislike. Not that the Jews are at all inclined to take this hatred meekly. They already feel their power, and when threatened with expulsion have been known to reply: "Go away yourselves, you stupid Christians, if you don't feel happy here."

It is a pity that in our antipathy towards a race which is so widely dissimilar to our own, we are apt to lose sight of its virtues and to omit the lesson to be derived from them; for these virtues, strange to say, partake largely of a Christian character. True charity, union among themselves, strong family ties, and fellow-feeling to assist and enable the poorest of their brethren to succeed, are characteristic of them. And the fact most easily lost sight of is, that these so-called Christian virtues are almost as much the cause of the Jew's success as his clear-headed sobriety in money matters, his keen instinct for discovering our weak spots, his dexterity in availing himself of them, and his persistence of effort, all concentrated on the one aim of worldly success. In truth, the secret of Jewish success consists not only in his strong qualities, but in our untruthfulness to our ideals (*unsere Unechtheit*).

If we were true to the latter, he might assail us in vain. As it is, he has assimilated our strong points, even our virtues, and overcomes us by playing on our weakness. And yet the most widespread accusation against the Jew is, that he is commercially unscrupulous, dishonest. We hold this to be the most unjust of all the reproaches levelled at him. We have yet to gauge the measure of our own scrupulosity. In the meantime, it is a positive fact that the biggest swindles in London, Paris and New York, during the last twenty years, have been almost exclusively the work of the Caucasian, sad to say!

Let us even go a step further. When we bear in mind the natural tricky instincts of kindred races in the East, whence the Jews sprang—when we remember the persecutions the latter have suffered during so many centuries—we cannot refuse a tribute of respect to the many excellent qualities they possess. We may call them unscrupulous; but they may justly retort that our ideals are not theirs, and that they are more faithful to theirs than we to ours.

We were once discussing the question of business confidence with an Austrian. "Confidence," he said; "I have no confidence in anybody." Now this is all very well, but the Catholic priest has confidence in the Jewish banker, for he intrusts him with the funds of his Church. We have it on the authority of one priest, that the Jews are the only people he would care to trust.

In the press the Jew is accused of trickery.

Then why do we read the papers which we are thoroughly aware are edited by him? In Austria the answer is simple: because they are almost the only ones worth reading.

V

The Austrians cannot reproach the Hebrew, because, being a sober Asiatic, he is not carried away by their passions and their ideals. He simply panders in a legitimate commercial way to their wants and tastes, to the best of his intellectual and commercial ability. The Emperor is not of his race; why should he be ready to shed tears for him, let alone to die for him? The aristocracy does not recognise him; why then should he refrain from twitting it with its weaknesses? The Austrians are ready to fly at each other's throats. What interest can the Jew have to prevent their doing so? Their squabbles only deviate their hatred for the time being from him, and are thus of service to him. That they take what he openly offers as eagerly as the baby takes to the feeding-bottle—for in Vienna newspaper reading is a serious occupation—this surely cannot constitute a reproach to be levelled at the Hebrew. On the contrary, it is a splendid testimony to his intellectual abilities that your full-grown manhood swarms the *cafés* of Vienna from morning until night, eager to partake of the pabulum provided by a coterie of, perhaps, thirty to forty Hebrews. Whether it consist mainly of clever

banter and ridicule of your institutions and your public men, or of critical opinions telling the reader what to applaud and what to condemn, the result is the same. It is a clear case of intellectual bondage, as effectual and far-reaching as any other kind. And we are even inclined to think that, taken all in all, the Austrian Jews do not abuse their journalistic power, but rather wield it with a fair amount of moderation—indeed, very much more so than the Czech press use theirs. But so little is this dominion of the Jews realised, that people are said to exist in Austria and elsewhere who still speak of converting the Jews. “Why, good Christians, they have nearly succeeded in converting you.”

Another complaint which the Austrian makes against the Jew is, that he is what the Germans call *ein Streber*: a “striver”—a clever tricky self-seeker; a man who is not particular as to the means he employs as long as he “gets on.” As if Christianity had none such! As if in Austria the cunning little Saxon or the astute Wurtemburger who comes to Austria to make his fortune, are more particular in this respect! As if we had never heard the motto of an eminent Christian railway director: “The world is my oyster; I will open it!”

In one sense a Jew is tempted to employ means, if he wishes to succeed, of which the Christian need not avail himself. For he starts with hatred against him. Thus, however learned he may be in

law, clever in science, or conscientious as a business man, he must first conquer aversion before you will employ him. And the wonder is that he succeeds in this. If he does this by trickery alone, how foolish must those be who oppose him and afterwards trust him! As a matter of fact, when the Jew succeeds, it is often not money that is his ultimate aim, but rather the respect which we would fain deny him, and which we only accord to those who possess money.

No, we refuse to believe that the Jew is one whit more money-grasping than the Christian. On the contrary, according to the laws of psychology he might even be less so, for it is in human nature to value highest that which is most difficult to attain. And the average Jew makes money with facility (*spreizend*). He may prize titles and other distinctions more than the Christian, because they have hitherto been more out of his reach; this last, however, is no longer the case, for a German rhyme has it:

"Jeder Schmul wird Consul,
Jeder Aaron wird Baron."

But no title or distinction will affect his sober judgment in business matters. His steady success proves this up to the hilt in Austria. He is further accused of arrogance. Our experience is, that Freemasonic good-nature is more characteristic of the Jew than arrogance, at least towards those who meet him without arrogance. There can be no

doubt that between Jews of different spheres of life, there is less arrogance than among Christians.

VI

It has been often said that the Jew is a disintegrating force; that the preponderance of the Jew spells decay. And this we are inclined to believe; and for this reason, that the population is inferior in powers of resistance, which allows a foreign antipathetic race, which is not productive in the word's highest sense, to predominate. Even Spinoza, perhaps the greatest Jew of modern times, was more noted for the nobility of his thoughts than for the originality of his philosophical system. No Jewish inventor, no Jewish painter, dramatist or architect of undisputed first rank is known. This certainly lends some colour to the assertion of his enemies, that he originates nothing, but manipulates everything. He certainly does not shine as an originator or producer. That, however, means nothing. It is not to genius that we look up, or which succeeds. The prize is to the "clever" as opposed to the *excellent*, and the Jew is "clever." As a matter of fact, the Jew is unsurpassed as a manipulator, and we live in the age of the successful manipulator. And this largely explains why the dominion of the Jews is of our own, and not of a previous era.

There are others beside the Jew adept in this; but in Austria the Jew has no serious competitor worth mentioning. Not that the worthy Austrian

need take this as an unalloyed compliment. For, if he is less able, that does not mean that he is less eager: witness the arrogant, purse-proud, Austrian Christian *parvenu*, who has completely gone off his head since his millions brought him the title of Imperial Councillor! Surely it is nothing to be ashamed of in the Jew that he remains cool in dealing with money matters, whilst the Christian loses his head in similar circumstances. A Liberal Prime Minister may make him a baron; the Jew out of gratitude may put the Minister up to a "good thing"; but gratitude will never obscure the Jew's vision to the extent of making him run any money risk on the belief in the said Liberal Minister. The Jew may find it to his interest to puff him, it is true, but he does not believe in him.

We ought not surely to find fault with the Jew because he assists us to blow about our little soap-bubbles, because we rarely find him to be fool enough to stake his money on their genuineness, whether they take the form of a popular statesman, a popular general, or a bogus company. That the Jew leaves to the Caucasian; he it is who has the keenest of scents for the huckster, being by force of circumstances usually in the trade himself.

The most plausible ground on which it would seem permissible to criticise the Jew fairly as man by man is, that, being a tough Asiatic Semite—a soft impeachment he invariably endeavours to refute, preferring to pass as a brother suffering from religious intolerance—he possesses the characteristics

of his race, and that some of these are distasteful to us. It might also be urged, that he does not always use the power he possesses to appeal to our best instincts ; but neither do many Christians. His preponderance has also another practical drawback, in that it means two Sundays in the week, and thus an irksome restriction on business.

In a little Austrian town, the old-fashioned custom still exists of the watchman waking the citizens by calling out : "The clock has struck five. Beloved Christians, get up and praise the Lord." One day a leading Jewish inhabitant called on the mayor, and told him that as there were more Jews than Christians living in his street, he thought the watchman might also call out : "Beloved Jews," etc. "No, Moses," replied the mayor. "You Jews are always wide awake as it is ; but if I were not to wake my Christians, they would sleep on even longer than they do now."

And yet, with all the weapons he wields, such is the mollifying effect of Austrian life in general, that in Vienna and Budapesth even the sober wide-awake Jew is occasionally carried away by the sensuous work-killing atmosphere. He becomes untrue to himself, and in this instance the words of Ernest Renan apply to him and his :

"Ceux qui ont tué Jésus Christ et ont bouleversé un monde, viennent s'éteindre dans les boudoirs capitonnés des Champs Elysées et meurent du ramollissement de la moëlle épinière." *

* Ernest Renan : Preface to "L'Ecclesiaste." Paris.

CHAPTER VI

THE VIENNESE

How sometimes Nature will betray its folly,
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
To harder bosoms !

SHAKESPEARE

I

MORALISTS have reproached the Austrians, and more especially the Viennese, with their levity and their light-heartedness. We are not, however, informed what may be the state of ethics at the headquarters of these censors. When we review mankind, we feel it to be a bold undertaking to reproach any corporate body of our fellow-creatures on the score of "morality." There are so many moralities, that we feel inclined to reserve our moral indignation for more concrete things than Viennese levity and light-heartedness.

Sympathy, pity, and even love, are more fruitful instincts than critical reproach, for the gauging of human character in general. And poor indeed must be the nature which fails to find scope for these in Vienna. For, with all their weaknesses, the Viennese still offer to us the sight of a people

whose daily life, untainted with hypocrisy, reveals its human weaknesses with artless simplicity. None of these too, are of such a character as to shock us by their brutality.

It has been whispered before now that the Viennese have given themselves up to the enjoyment of music and dancing when the enemy was marching on their city. Yes, the giddy crowd thoughtlessly cheered Offenbach's "Belle Hélène" whilst the sunny soil of Bohemia was thirstily sucking up some of Austria's best hearts'-blood. But when the Emperor Francis Joseph met the crestfallen old King of Saxony at the Vienna railway station after Sadowa, there was still some sympathy left for the unhappy monarchs in that same crowd. The Emperor had only tears to offer up for the misery his policy had brought upon his people. The frivolous Viennese, too, did not curse him in their hearts for all that: they sorrowed with him, and their tears mingled with his and turned to pity.

Austria's unfortunate generals were cited to appear before a court-martial in those days; no mob, however, called them traitors or shrieked for their blood; at most a Vienna cab-driver may have jestingly called out to his jaded *Rosinante*: "Come along, you old field-marshal!"

II

A queer compound of Teuton, Slavonic, Hungarian, and even Hebrew blood are these Viennese;

they are, too, largely representative of Austria herself. They have, however, always retained a certain human decorum, even amid the greatest misfortunes, and they have known such. And indeed, like all Austrians, they were stout fighters in their time: as witness their heroic conduct on many an historical occasion, notably at the sieges of Vienna by the Turks. On one such occasion the heroism of the Viennese may be said to have materially helped to preserve Europe from being overrun by the Infidel.

It is quite possible that their middle class, their working men, may not possess the hard, silent, battling nerve of the *élite* of the Anglo-Saxon stock. They probably do not; neither, however, does their social life resemble the dismal night of drink and dirt to be witnessed elsewhere. There is poverty enough, and too much crime, as well as an abnormal percentage of suicides, as there ever will be where weak human stuff prevails. We do not for a moment say that the Viennese are a strong race. Yet death by starvation is unknown either in Vienna or Budapesth. And Vienna has a hard-working, self-respecting working class, who work at low wages, and whose homes are so tidy and clean that they fill us with envy.

Life is no longer as easy as of yore even in the gay *Kaiserstadt*. The prospect of luxury to be attained without work is alluring, and has cast its syren spell over the good Viennese as it has also over others. The effect of this was

well described at the time of the great "crash" in 1873.*

"The soap-bubble of general prosperity is burst at last. Wondering, and with an unbelieving shake of the head, we had seen it rise higher and higher. But the crowd admired its play of colours, and eagerly confided fortune, happiness and honour to the froth-born balloon in its journey to the land of fables. And now this Armada, which set sail out of a straw, is wrecked by a sunbeam! Beggars are now those who freighted it, in despair and disgraced. There is no resting-place for their misery but the madhouse or the deep waters."

Yes, the "madhouse" or the "deep waters"! The consciousness of ruin and dishonour, of being the cause of ruin to others, drives the Viennese speculator to suicide. If he were made of sterner stuff—of true "Imperial metal"—he might have lived to fight another day, perhaps to make a fortune, and ultimately to die "worth" so much! Your Viennese bogus company promoter and his congeners, whether Jew or Gentile, do not, however, as yet understand how to screw their courage up to the sticking-point. And when the public examination takes place, which provides the only slender chance his victims possess of getting a financial scoundrel by the throat, he is not cool and self-possessed enough to walk into open court with the brazen effrontery which is manifested under similar circum-

* Der Krach. Wiener Spaziergänge. Spitzer.

stances elsewhere. Such as he are not quick-witted enough to face their victims in open court, to insult the prosecuting counsel, and to score roars of laughter at the expense of the wretches they have ruined. Nor are there Viennese to be found who will call out to more fortunate miscreants: "Come and represent us in Parliament! What care we whom you have ruined: you are good enough for us, for you have nursed our constituency and subscribed handsomely to all our local charities."

In these things the simple Viennese have yet a deal to learn.

III

The feeling of attachment which the Austrian entertains for Vienna, and the Hungarian for Budapesth, is *sui generis*. The only sentiment to be compared with it is the pride of the Parisian for his goddess Lutetia. The latter is, however, after all a very different sentiment. With the Parisian it is mainly compounded of vanity and the belief in the unrivalled superiority of his idol—the peacock instinct, which forgets the ugly feet and glories in the unparalleled splendour of the plumage. There is little tenderness in it, whereas the love of the Viennese for Vienna comes somehow from the heart. The Viennese knows that Vienna, although so beautiful, has been cutstripped by Berlin; he might know that it is being outpaced by Budapesth; but he would love Vienna equally though starvation

were writ large on its walls; he could not help loving its dear old nooks and alleys any more than he could help enjoying the sunny life of pleasure which it offers him, or than he could help being enslaved by its lovely women. What is more, we can understand and sympathise with this feeling. The intense charm of that traditional free and joyous social life of all classes to be found in Vienna accounts for much of it.

IV

What has, however, perhaps contributed most to make the Viennese and their typical life what they are, is the peculiar patriarchal relationship between them and their reigning House for many past generations. For, apart from politics, there is a strong social life pulsating in all human communities, and it is here that the Habsburg influence has shown some of its most sympathetic results.

We have yet to refer to the present Emperor, but at all times when their political course followed dark, tortuous, and shiftY ways, marked by disaster, bigotry and oppression, the Habsburg rulers were as a rule simple and unaffectedly human in their manners and in their habits,* and solved the secret

* Even in their tastes the Habsburg monarchs have shown a remarkable affinity to the Viennese. Some of them have been noted as composers—particularly the Emperors Charles VI., Ferdinand III., Leopold I., and Joseph V. Of the latter, it is said that had he not been an Emperor he might have become a great composer.

how to gain and cherish the affection of the inhabitants of the capital.

These qualities shone forth after a long eclipse in the person of the great Maria Theresa, and particularly in her husband, Francis of Lorraine. What Austrian does not know the following little instance of Maria Theresa's unaffected manner.

When the Empress received the news that her second son, the Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany had his first son born to him (February 12, 1768) she hurried, in her grandmotherly delight, in her night-attire through the corridors of the palace into the adjoining Burg theatre, and, leaning far out of her box, called down into the pit: "Poldl (Leopold) has got a boy, and just as a present on my wedding-day: how thoughtful of him." *

And yet this simple Habsburg woman was the greatest ruler the Austrians ever had. Her bigotry was the outcome of the age she lived in and the education she received, but it was powerless to blur the keenness of her intellect or to chill her intensely human heart. She could lavishly distribute eighty thousand pounds sterling annually from her privy purse among the poor; but she and her husband lived in the simplicity of the Vienna burgher in daily life. And the example set by this worthy Imperial couple has been faithfully followed by their successors. For while before their time the sarcophagi of the Austrian Cæsars were huge elabo-

* "Der Poldt hat an Bua, und grad zum Bindband auf mein Hochzeitstag—der ist galant."

rate monuments of stone and silver, ever since Maria Theresa they have followed the example set by her son, the Emperor Joseph. All the Habsburgs of recent times are buried in simple zinc coffins, without any ornament to distinguish them from those of a pauper. There they rest in the midst of their people.

The outward structure of the Imperial palace itself discloses a touch of the patriarchal Imperialism of the Habsburgs. It is situated in the very centre of the town, and bridges one of the principal streets, itself a main thoroughfare. Being, too, without railings or impediments of any kind, the people walk unhindered through its vast court-yards; another testimony to the relationship between ruler and subjects.

But, as if this were not enough, once a year the Emperor actually gives up part of his palace to his good Viennese. A charity ball of the Vienna citizens is annually held in the Hofburg. It is almost necessary to have lived in Vienna in order to realise the strange contrast between the pomp of official etiquette and ceremony and the personal simplicity of the Habsburgs when off duty, which has so endeared them to the Viennese, and has indirectly had a deal to do with the making of Viennese life as we see it. How is the haughty noble to drive past and avoid contact with the people or look upon them as dirt, when the Emperor walks without escort among them, when the Habsburg Archdukes dine unceremoniously

at the public restaurants or mingle among the people in the Prater, and feel happy in losing themselves among the throng? There is nothing more irksome to them than an engrafting of the etiquette of the Court on their relationships in private life.

And how could the plainest citizen do otherwise than assimilate the good breeding which distinguishes him, in order that such a state of things could be possible and congenial? That patriarchal instinct has to a large extent become part and parcel of the Viennese, the following anecdote may serve to show.

One evening, the late Crown Prince Rudolph, on entering the theatre, asked the old box-keeper whether the Emperor had yet arrived. "Ja, wohl; der Papa ist schon da," he replied. The liberal Crown Prince, who did not relish patriarchal principles, turned to Count Bombelles, saying: "Is the fellow drunk?" The box-keeper, mistaking the subject of the remark, innocently put in: "Not that I noticed, Kaiserl. Hoheit."

V

We are told that the love of pleasure, so typical of Vienna, has always been encouraged in high quarters, as a safety-valve for the pressure exercised in matters political. But, whether this be so or not, the effect is before us, and in spite of some

few drawbacks, it undoubtedly presents many congenial aspects. The most striking of these is the participation of all classes in the same customs and enjoyments. They have the same places of worship, and in their churches the poor sit beside the rich. Their sorrows even mingle in times of calamity and war, when the bereaved peasant woman comes to the capital and kneels in the St. Stefan's Cathedral, beside the Countess whose husband has perhaps also fallen in battle. Again, there is no hard-and-fast line of demarcation between the pleasures of the classes and the masses as is the case with us. While we flee the Bank-holiday mob in despair, in Vienna even the cab-driver seems to have some instincts in common with the Archduke. A uniform decency of behaviour is everywhere apparent. Unlike many other towns, even Berlin, where festivity among the lower orders frequently degenerates into rowdyism, there is something strikingly pleasurable and Austrian about merry-making here. Even in places of amusement of a more or less boisterous kind, such as music-halls and dancing saloons, if there is anybody who misbehaves himself, it may be an intoxicated aristocratic *Trottel*, who has returned from the races, but it will hardly ever be a true Viennese.

In the winter all Vienna gives itself up to divine Terpsichore. The memory of Fanny Elssler, the great dancer, lives greener in the sympathies of the Viennese than that of many a distinguished statesman—say, for instance, that of the late Count

Beust. Only the other day her tiny shoe was exhibited as a relic ; and articles are still written in newspapers descriptive of her divine form ; and, what is more, we like to read them.

Every year a series of splendid masked balls, open to all, are held on the ice, where some of the best skaters in Europe dance quadrilles to the strains of the military bands. Huge electric lights turn night into day, and where thousands disport themselves, tens of thousands look on and enjoy the harmless spectacle. There we have seen the nobility, many of the highest of the land (the late Austrian Prime Minister, Count Andrassy, among them) skating unheeded amid the gay throng, only intent on enjoying itself in decency.

Up till Lent, public dances, masked or otherwise, appeal to all classes, from those at the Opera House, where the Imperial family lends its presence to the scene, down to the annual ball of the Viennese washerwomen, which takes place in one of the suburbs, and which is by no means a sight to be disdained.

Nor are all this gaiety and dancing, all these sights of pleasurable intermixture of classes, the only features which seem to be in themselves significant ; rather is it the condition of social culture which makes them possible, that strikes us with wonder and admiration.

It is in the summer, however, when Nature has put on her festive dress—and where can she be more attractive than in the neighbourhood of

Vienna?—that the inhabitants of the metropolis respond to the spirit evoked by the glad season.

If you wish to see this popular spirit at work, stroll into the Wurstel* Prater, on a fine summer evening. You will then catch a glimpse of that “something” which makes Vienna so dear to the Viennese. Nowhere else in the world is its like to be seen. A hundred booths, *carroussels*, and beer gardens are all crowded with people. A hundred bands of music are in full play: some being full-stringed orchestras; others, a little outside the main thoroughfare, consisting of but a couple of seedy minstrels, one thumping a piano as accompaniment to a cracked violin. But no jostling, no brutality, no rowdyism are *en évidence*.

VI

Let us take a peep at the “*Eisvogel*”: the concert at the sign of the “Kingfisher”! The garden is crowded with people of all classes; there is a good sprinkling of officers clustered round little tables, promiscuously with the citizens, many of whom belong to the artisan class. Hawkers come round and offer dainty refreshments—bread, sausage, cheese—which are partaken of indiscriminately by all. These articles, too, are as yet clean and unadulterated.

Every inch of ground is taken up in front of an

* Part of the Prater, the Hyde Park of Vienna.

elevated platform, on which a full orchestra of young ladies, all dressed in spotless white, with pink sashes, are electrifying the audience with the strains of the "Beautiful Blue Danube." The audience literally quiver in unison with the beat of that cunning violin-bow held by the prettiest and most graceful of the players.

Here, in this realm of sensuous sound, Johann Strauss, the valse composer of the world, is indeed king! It is something, after all, to be able to thrill a whole people by means of a few catgut and horse-hair strings! And here, although everybody is as decorous and orderly as could be wished, it is as if the very air were impregnated with a natural sensuous intoxicant. Something it is akin to that which must have been in the thoughts of poor Heine, when, in his somewhat erotic glorification of woman, he burst out with :

"Das Land, und die Religion,
Das sind nur Kleidungsstücke,
Fort mit der Hülle, dass ich ans Herz
Den nackten Menschen drücke." *

Suddenly the music changes from the valse to one of Austria's beautiful national hymns :

"Oh, Du mein Oesterreich."

This is the psychological moment, and the current of feeling of the audience changes with the music :

* *Anglice*:—Our country, our religion, are merely outward wrappage : away with the covering, that I may press the human being to my heart.

they join in a semi-reverent chorus to those strains that have cheered many a loyal Austrian to do and die for his country on the blood-stained battle-field.

Now, all this is unlike anything to be witnessed elsewhere. It is unique in its combination of decency of behaviour with the enthusiasm of pleasurable enjoyment. Even the young women who form the orchestra are different from anything to be seen elsewhere. There is an evidence of breeding and lady-like grace and bearing, as gratifying to behold as the rare physical beauty of some among them.

With all their vivacity, the Viennese have been long noted for this decency of behaviour, this freedom from coarseness and vulgarity. An English author, previously quoted,* who visited Vienna in 1779, was forcibly impressed by the behaviour of the crowd even at a public execution. They joined the monks in prayer for the departed: "they view every part of the ceremony with other sensations than those of an English mob, assembled to see men carried in a cart to be hanged at Tyburn. Here it excites all those beneficial emotions which check the progress of crime."

Thus, over a hundred years ago, there seems to have been an enviable amount of social culture where there was but little political liberty. Can it

* "Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin," etc. N. W. Wraxall, London, 1800, vol. ii. pp. 265-6.

be that these are mutually excluding characteristics? If so, there may be something after all to be said for the non-political conditions of the past.

VII

The Viennese are admittedly a pleasure-loving people, as opposed to one of stern hard work, and thus they may rarely taste that highest happiness which can only come of work honestly done. But to the many, how rare a happiness is this anywhere! And how deep is the misery where conditions of social barbarism shut out the tiniest ray of light to the weak!

Now there must be some among us on whom the sight of dirt, drunkenness, abject misery, the fumes of adulterated alcohol, react almost with the acuteness of physical suffering. And we do not see how it is possible for such to help comparing the social and holiday life of the Viennese, and in fact of the Austrian masses generally, with the deplorable sunless existence led by a large percentage of our own working-class population, not merely in London, but in all the great centres of industry throughout Great Britain. Somehow, Austrian civilisation appears to have gone a long way towards realising that "letting-in" of a little social sunlight into the lives of the working classes, the pleading for which is at the root of most of Walter Besant's writings, but which all the charitable donations,

bequests, and People's Palaces in the world will never realise.

When one sees the lovely environs of Vienna, Budapesth, and so many other Austrian towns, and notes the joyous holiday life of the people, one cannot help thinking of this.

It does seem a strange anomaly that there should be so little "moderation" on the great drink question. It is either a case of wholesale drunkenness or of rabid teetotalism. Is no middle course to be found between these extremes? Apparently not.

Is not this most unnatural, and must it not bring—has it not already brought—retribution in its train? Can it not be possible, in course of time, to cull a little of that brightness of life so evident everywhere in Austria, without its concomitant excess?

Just think of the grimy knife-grinder of Paradise Square, Sheffield, sitting at home of a Sunday in his dirty lodgings, with his sluttish wife and children, his vilely cooked dinner to look forward to; think of the Glasgow factory hand, who comes home of a Saturday night to find that his drunken wife has pawned the bed he thought to lie upon. Or let us in fancy take a step higher in the social scale, and think of the hard-worked office clerk, whose only portion of sense enjoyment, or the only bit of colour he ever sees in life, is to spend an evening in the pit of a crowded theatre, witnessing a dramatic performance in which all the characters are far

removed from him in station of life. Whether he go amid the garish lights of the music-hall, with its fumes of rank tobacco and adulterated alcohol, or if he take a holiday into hideous seaside lodgings, whose keepers fleece him without mercy, such a one meets with the same unjust treatment. Oh, that such as he could only step out on the enchanted carpet of Aladdin, and be brought on a bright Sunday morning in summer within sight of the venerable spires of St. Stefan in Vienna! For it is a sight indeed to see the queer, old-fashioned, straggling Stefansplatz on a Sunday morning during, or immediately after, Divine Service in the Cathedral. It is crowded with people of all sorts and conditions of life; alike only in the fact that they are neatly dressed, and that they are all evidently in good spirits at the prospect of a happy day, open to, and within reach of, every one.

English workmen and clerks would be surprised to learn that most of these people belong to the wage-earning class, and that their wages are very much less than those earned in the great industrial centres of England.

They gather in their crowds in the streets on a bright Sunday morning, like the swallows ere they fly homewards; for in the afternoon they spread out far and wide among the lovely suburbs of Vienna. You can watch them crowding up the picturesque Kahlenberg, where music and refreshments are to be obtained by the slenderest purse. There you may catch sight of the Archduke Charles

Louis sitting, with his family, unmolested among them, at one of the little tables laid out in the open air, listening to the band and enjoying the sight of happy faces. Or you can follow the gay throng into the adjoining woods, where some Viennese choral society (*Gesangverein*), recruited from the artisan class, are lifting up their voices, and giving a fine rendering, too, of some beautiful German part song, such as Mendelssohn's "*Wer hat Dich Du schöner Wald*," worshipping God as truly in sunshine on these pine-clad hills as ever those beneath the dimly lighted Gothic dome!

VIII

Let us, again, wander farther afield through the vine-clad suburban hills that look down on Baden or Vöslau. A bright stream passes the houses, where the nimble trout still darts unmolested through the crystal waters, where joyous life and colour and happy faces abound, and, free from every taint of rowdyism and vulgarity, bid all forget for the time that man is made of dust and doomed to die!

In these environs the Viennese of all classes enjoy their Sundays in the summer. Beautiful swimming-baths invite the dusty townsman in the forenoon, while in the evening regimental bands play at the different restaurants, where dainty dinners are served in the open air to thousands of holiday-makers.

Would that one had the power to say: "Come out, poor toiling humanity, into this lovely country, along roads shaded by endless rows of fruit-trees, amid smiling villas, unrestrained by walls and fences, through vineyards laden with their rich purple fruit. You may walk right up to them, you may touch the grapes, for you have come to a country where the pilfering of orchards is unknown." The very air is alive with song, for the Austrians, like all Teutonic peoples (and unlike the Latins, who wage a war of extermination against the little songsters of vale and hill), love to gladden their hearts with Nature's sweet music.

These and many such sights and sounds are to be seen and enjoyed by all on a bright summer's day in and near beautiful Vienna. And yet a reminiscence of the past comes unbidden even here to disturb them.

It is winter—on the 5th December 1791.

The evening twilight is well on towards darkness. It is snowing hard as four porters enter the cemetery of St. Marx, carrying a coffin. They deliver a piece of paper to the grave-digger: it is the formal claim to a common grave for a body—a common grave in a pit, which is only to be filled up when sixteen pine wood coffins lie four abreast in it. The grave-digger reads the name of the dead man. It is "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart." And to-day not a soul in the pleasure-loving city can tell where those sacred bones lie!

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPEROR

"I have frequently heard the attendants of princely personages cry out to the people, 'Hats off!' This is a piece of folly. These marks of courtesy should be inspired, not exacted."

MADAME CAMPAN.

I

PRINCE GORTCHAKOF personified Russian hatred of Austria, and laid the foundation of his own brilliant political career, when, as Russian Ambassador at Vienna, he gave vent to the following deprecatory expression :

"L'Autriche n'est pas un état, ce n'est qu'un gouvernement." *

This was but a half-truth after all. It omitted to take into account the intense loyalty which the Austrians have ever entertained for their Emperor. It was the strength of this sentiment which enabled the Emperor Francis to tell the great Napoleon that, notwithstanding all the latter's military glory, he, the defeated Habsburg, possessed one advantage

* Austria is not a State, it is only a Government.

over him still: though vanquished he could return to his capital, which Napoleon dare not do!

What was true eighty-five years ago is as true to-day. It was proved to be true on the fields of Solferino and of Sadowa. It is a feeling which has outlived a hundred defeats, and might outlive as many more; a most interesting phenomenon, surely, in an age of democratic propaganda—of blind worship of success in all its worldly aspects. Misfortune is, after all, the test that shows the “grit” in a people, as in a monarch.

II

The Emperor of Austria, shorn of his autocratic power by the written word of half a dozen constitutions, now stands alone amid the jealousies, hatreds, and dissensions of half a dozen nationalities, each fighting for its own hand with all the weapons of newly fledged Liberalism. And yet he is unquestionably paramount among all by the mere force of his quiet, dignified, unassuming, tradition-hallowed personality.

Although the Government is carried on by responsible Ministers as with us, the Emperor's personality is deeply impressed upon every act performed in the name of the Crown. His individual influence may be traced in all negotiations which tend to allay party strife, or to arrest conflicts between races. That is why, when an Imperial speech is under discussion, there is no indiffer-

ence in the public mind, but much earnest reflection. It is felt that the words spoken are the Emperor's own, and, if the meaning be at all obscure, the anxiety may be greater on that account; but it is always mitigated by a full and loyal confidence in the august speaker.

The feeling of popular antagonism which exists in some countries for a party, which is supposed to be in special favour with the Sovereign, is unknown in Austria. It is felt that there is no antagonism of interest between the people and their monarch.

The Emperor's personal contact with the lowest as well as with the highest of his subjects explains how constitutionalism is worked in Austria-Hungary. It is a thing *sui generis* different from anything that exists elsewhere, and not to be imitated. It cannot be said of the Emperor *qu'il règne et ne gouverne pas*. He both reigns and governs, though always within the limits of the Constitution granted to his people.

III

The days are gone by when the easy-going Austrians were literally justified in singing:

"There is only one Kaiser town,
There is only one Vienna."*

There is another "Kaiser town" now in the

* "Es giebt nur a Kaiserstaedt,
Es giebt nur a Wien."

north, on the banks of the Spree,* which has taken the wind of public life and bustling commerce out of the sails of her ancient Danubian sister, Vindobona. There is, however, only one Emperor still in that full sense of unique blind devotion which binds a great nation to the person of a monarch, in fair and foul weather alike.

Prince Bismarck once said :

“ Whatever dissensions the different nationalities of Austria may have among one another, as soon as the Emperor Francis Joseph gets on horseback, they all follow him with enthusiasm.” †

In truth, at the present moment the feeling is general that amid the dangers, internal and external, that threaten the very existence of Austria-Hungary, the person of the Emperor is the keystone, the cement, that holds the whole fabric together. The enforced obedience of the past has given way to a voluntary idolatry, mingled with poetry, in the present.

For the birthright of a free country, invaluable at this time of day, in which the Sovereign can be daily slandered with impunity, in which an action for *lèse majesté* is practically unknown, in which

* The Viennese have since varied their old song thus :

“ Es giebt nur a Räuberstadt,
Und das ist Berlin.”

Anglice :—“ There is only one Robber town,
And that is Berlin.”

† “ Was auch die Völker Oesterreichs gegen einander haben mögen, sowie Kaiser Franz Joseph zu Pferde steigt folgen sie ihm alle begeistert nach.”

the freedom of the subject is so paramount from all the trammels of feudality that none but the mean need be enslaved—all this must not blind us to the fact that there is a touch of poetry in this feeling of loyalty of the Austrian subject for his Sovereign. This we may, perhaps, realise if we picture the admiration we feel for our statesmen, our aristocracy, our plutocracy, and our successful men in every walk of life, all concentrated on one man! And even thus the comparison is inadequate.

This is, too, the more remarkable when we bear in mind that in politics the Habsburgs (and the present Emperor is no exception) have a sad record, comprising not only a lack of fortune,* but even doubtful faith; for has not the ingratitude of the House of Austria become a very byword among nations?

The famous Bavarian Elector, Maximilian the First, who may be said to have saved the Habsburg dynasty during the first part of the Thirty Years' War, had good cause to complain of Habsburg ingratitude. The murder of Wallenstein during that same war has never been properly explained. Prince Eugène of Savoy, the greatest military captain the Habsburgs ever had, thought he had good cause to resent the treatment meted out to him. The chivalrous Sobieski, after saving Vienna from the Turks in 1683, had a lively experience of Habsburg

* In the course of three centuries the House of Habsburg has been ousted from Spain, Lorraine, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany.

ingratitude. Did not the Emperor Francis, too, allow Andreas Hofer, the Tyrolese patriot, to be outlawed and shot, 1809? And in our own time, are we not told that the widow of Nicolas, the Russian autocrat, died without forgiving the Emperor of Austria his ingratitude to her husband?

Lastly, it is certain that those who were surprised after the war of 1866 to find Bavaria suddenly hand and glove allied to Prussia on the morrow of previous antagonism, would have been less so if it had been generally known how the Bavarians had been left to make what terms they could with the victorious Prussians.

IV

How comes it, then, that against such a black record of political disaster and turpitude, the head of the House of Habsburg stands to-day enshrined in the hearts of his subjects, as perhaps no other monarch on the face of the globe?

Is it only the result of a want of independence of thought and character—a want of judgment—or, worse still, a manifestation of the spirit of the lackey? Verily, here is a fact for the blind worshipper of mechanical majorities to take into consideration and to ponder over; for it does not accord with his latter-day creed. There is no use in looking for it in our political breviary: it has not place there. It comes from the heart. It is innate in the Austrian people; but not in the

catechism or in the body of parliamentary ethics. We can find no explanation for it in the laws that regulate the rise and fall of the Three per Cents.; we cannot find a breath referring to it in the vaults of the Bank or in its books. Devotion which only portends self-sacrifice can hardly be considered a profitable investment. Whether in victory or defeat, it is yet a striking reality, this attachment to a ruling family of a great historical people.

That tradition is for the most part accountable for it, may go without saying; but tradition alone is, in these democratic days, a frail craft even for an Emperor to embark in. We believe that, besides the force of tradition, there is a deal of genuine human nature to account for this and sundry other significant signs in the life of peoples. It is part of those qualities which will outlive majorities and democracies, and crop up again and again in the affairs of man, to confound those who fondly imagine that human concerns can be always measured out, squared and regulated, by the *obiter dicta* of their bloodless philosophy.

A few years ago, when the Emperor Francis Joseph had reigned forty years—for he ascended the throne on December 2, 1848—a proposal was put forth to celebrate his Jubilee as a ruling Sovereign.

No harm in this so far; but busybodies, toadies and lackeys—perhaps also a fair sprinkling of harmless, honest, but superficial men among them—wanted

to organise public subscriptions to present precious stones, gold and silver trifles, to the Kaiser—the anointed head of an Imperial dynasty—as if he were a *bric-à-brac* collector! How could such a man care for presents like these? He was born and bred to look to other things as the goal of life's work. He was privileged in this, inasmuch as, standing above all, he could overlook all and know it to be his duty to care for all. Here in verity was something of that kingly instinct with which shrewd Gregor Alexandrowitsch Potemkin credited the Great Katherine, when, in order to give her pleasure on her travels through the Crimea (Province of Tauria, 1787) he got up scenes of flourishing villages and well-dressed villagers. It was not the costly theatrical properties that were the end in view. He wanted to show her the prosperity of those dominions of hers.

On the occasion in question the Emperor Francis Joseph needed no prompting. He went out of the way of all subscriptions, presentations, and demonstrations. He left his capital, and bade his loyal subjects think of the poor instead, and give their moneys to them.

V

There is no Court Journal in Austria. The Emperor's daily movements, as far as they may be of public interest, are briefly chronicled in the daily papers. But they find no eager readers, neither

are the Austrians anxious to find out day by day who has been honoured by the sunshine of Imperial favour. Unlike the case in some countries, where, strange to say, although partially held in contempt, royalty is still able to confer social status on a whole family, simply by allowing one of its members to bow in its presence—a privilege most eagerly sought after—neither cause nor effect exist here. Austrian loyalty is of another kind. Neither the Emperor nor his family is set upon and hunted down in the streets of his capital, like a quarry fit for vulgar sport. He can walk alone and unmolested through the crowded streets of Vienna: the natural good taste of the people makes this possible.

It is only on special occasions that the Austrians “run after” their monarch; and when they do, there is again a touch of genuine human nature in the doing of it.

Such an occasion was that of the Emperor's return to Vienna in October 1891, after his progress through Bohemia and the frustrated attempt of a miscreant to wreck his train. The Mayor had twenty-four hours previously issued a short public notice, calling upon the people to receive their Emperor worthily. That was enough in Austria. No busybodies, no public subscriptions! The whole affair sprang, as it were, spontaneously out of the earth, or rather out of the heart of the people.

It is the evening of the 2nd of October, when the Emperor arrives at the Franz Joseph station, where the Imperial carriages have been thoughtfully

ordered to draw up at a side entry, so as not to block the way of the crowd. An Austrian crowd can be trusted to stand beside its Sovereign without being fenced off by a living or a dead wall. The Emperor has arrived, and is emerging from the station. He wears the usual plain military coat, of a grey dove-colour, devoid of all stars and crosses. He takes his seat in a plain carriage, accompanied only by a single aide-de-camp. No outriders, no military, no policemen are to be seen, as the Imperial carriage, driven at a walking pace, seems to be engulfed amid a sea of humanity. It is inconceivable how it can wend its way through such a mass of human beings. And yet there is no pushing or jostling, no evidence of the boisterous curiosity of the showman's crowd.

Suddenly a mighty volume of sound rises up, and spreads far and wide as the eye can see or the ear can hearken. Something like the distant roar of the ocean, but without its shrill piercing accent of storm. There is, indeed, something sublime in these waves of sound that form the spontaneous expression of love of a whole people for their Sovereign.

The Emperor's carriage has reached the Town Hall, a magnificent Gothic edifice, which glitters like a huge fairy palace in a sea of electric light. Fifty choral unions of the capital, hurriedly got together, have taken up their stand on the broad space in front of it. All at once they burst forth *uni sono* with Haydn's glorious national hymn:

"Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser."

There is a feeling of *Andacht* abroad. All hats are raised, and women even shed tears.

VI

It is on such occasions that his loyal subjects, particularly those of German race, feel drawn towards their Kaiser. For these possess, besides passionate devotion, that tender sentimentality which is reflected in their best poetry. When they behold this spare, grey-headed figure in their midst—the bearer of the greatest monarchical tradition of the past—they think of the wars in which he was invariably worsted; they instinctively recall the tears he and they had shed in unison over the reverses of their arms. They appreciate the silent renunciation it must have cost him to stifle his former passions, his inborn autocratic ambition, to become the faithful ally of the very Power which had dethroned him from the leadership of Germany. Lastly, they see the unhappy father, the tragic end of whose only son has eclipsed the evening of his life. His subjects appreciate all this, for there is a touch of genuine human nature in it all: in the sight of this prematurely old man—for he is only sixty-two—who has conquered himself, and only lives on with their welfare at heart, in silent fulfilment of duty. Misfortune has indeed ennobled the character of the Emperor of Austria, as it only can do with natures of the truest ring. As a young man, he was neither universally popular, nor was

his life free from those blemishes which taint humanity impartially, whether on the throne or in the cottage. The sad end of his son, the greatest sorrow of his life, revealed him, however, at his best. Whilst those around him were trying all in their power to render confusion worse confounded, the Emperor telegraphed to the Pope :

"Holy Father. Pray decide whether my poor son is to have Christian burial or not, exactly as if he were any other man. I wish for no favour. As for myself, I am determined to abdicate" (*quant à moi j'abdique*).

And it was only at the pressing instance of Leo XIII. that the Emperor is said to have remained true to the burden of his inheritance.

Like most simple and unspoilt natures, the Emperor Francis Joseph possesses a good deal of discernment and common sense. Being free from vanity, he can read through men, even if they happen to be cleverer than himself. Thus, years ago, when some Austrian courtiers were reviling the wickedness of Bismarck within the Emperor's hearing, he quietly murmured, half to himself: "Would that I had him!" *

On another occasion the Emperor was on a visit to the famous Adelsberg Caves. Moved by the grandeur of the scenery, he turned to a high official and exclaimed: "How weak and small we all are compared to the almightiness of Nature." The latter,

* "Wan i ihn nur hätt."

somewhat in a fix, ejaculated: "But surely not your Majesty?" Whereupon, Francis Joseph smilingly replied: "Yes, even I, as well as you!"

A man like this instinctively feels that it is not the glittering stars and crosses, the tailor-made uniforms, the sound of trumpets, drums or bells, the blaze of gorgeous pageants, that alone denote the monarch. It is the "man" that lies hidden beneath it all—the silent, modest, high-minded gentleman: the only true distinctive human prerogative of a monarch nowadays. He never dreams of reminding his subjects of his identity. They came into the world, as it were, with the consciousness of his presidentship over their destinies. It is now six long centuries that the Austrians have been accustomed to do and die for his family. Thus it is that he and his subjects have come to look upon their mutual relationship as a natural one.

This, too, harbours many little advantages in itself. For notwithstanding a slavishly subservient bureaucracy, which has been reinforced by a swarm of cunning self-seekers (*Streber*) in every sphere of life of recent growth, it is very difficult to gain personal distinctions from the Kaiser. The busy military attachés of foreign Powers, elsewhere ever on the look-out to better themselves by fussily obtruding themselves on the monarch, lose their chance here. His calm placidity enables him to see through the transparent motive of the self-seeker, the charity-mongering toady—a rare gift of kingship. An indulgent smile, perhaps, but few stars

and crosses are to be had for incense-burning to this Habsburg.

Not even of words is he prodigal; for he knows that such, when uttered in great moments, cause mankind to shed its blood willingly; these therefore must be reserved for such, and not thrown away. With him simplicity is in marked contradistinction to familiarity. When we bear all this in mind, it is not difficult to believe that the great authority which the Emperor exercises is largely due to his own personal qualities. And these in their turn are largely brought home to the intelligence and love of his people by the patriarchal simplicity of Habsburg methods to which we have already referred. Of these, one of the most striking instances is the privilege of petition still surviving in Austria.

VII

Twice a week the Emperor is accessible to all classes of his subjects. Whoever has a fair case of wrong suffered, is at liberty to apply by the road of grace (*auf dem Gnadenwege*) for an audience, through the *Oberst-hofmeisteramt* (a section of the Imperial household answering to that of our Lord Chamberlain's office). The cases are then duly laid before the Emperor.

When the supplicant's statements have been duly verified, and there is shown to be a case for redress, the petitioner, whether he be a cab-driver or a beggar, is received by the Emperor in special audience,

alone, nobody else, not even a secretary, being present. The applicant, whatever may be his station, is ushered into a study, and finds the Emperor in a plain uniform, without a single decoration. He may say what he likes, sure of being listened to with patient attention. The scenes that have been enacted in the Emperor's private audience chamber no chronicler will ever tell. Of the acts of kindness, mercy, and charity shown, of the swift redress of wrongs, of the shrewd soldierly advice given, and of the Imperial magnanimity at all times, no record can have been kept except in the Emperor's own memory, if even there.

Thus would it appear to be only in strict accordance with the fitness of things, that when the Emperor has anything to say to his subjects, it is ever as a kind father. "Children," he seems to say, "pray live on in peace, and cease your petty jealousies and bickerings."*

VIII

The Emperor Francis Joseph is also interesting to us as the last of those important Continental Sovereigns whose youth and early education fall prior to the year 1848. "Pre-'48 bred" will come to have a deeper meaning when the history of our

* "Kinder, seid doch gut, und lässt Eure kleinlichen Eifersüchteleien und Zänkereien."

times is competently surveyed and written by posterity, and the almost total neglect of character in the education of princes is duly noted as one of the drawbacks of a beneficial Liberal era.

In those days but just passed, and yet in some respects almost as remote as the Middle Ages, conditions of life were so different from those of our own, as to produce widely different results in the development of character. There were hardly any railways, no telegraphs, and the barometers of public opinion were both defective and incalculably slow in registering the state of things. These were serious defects according to our latter-day wants and habits; and yet they had their compensations, for men in responsible positions were not under the constant necessity of badgering publicity or cajoling its mouthpieces, of studying the fluctuating wind-gauge of popularity. Their nervous system consequently was not vitiated by anxiously looking for its daily register. Nor, on the other hand, was their vanity constantly excited by the perusal of fulsome pæans in praise of their slightest words and actions. Thus did they for the most part remain personally simple and unspoilt, even when arbitrary in council or yielding to unfortunate promptings.

They were educated to look to their own conscience, to their strict sense of honour, and to the eternal fitness of things in regulating their personal conduct.

In the days of which we are speaking, monarchs as well as ordinary men were far more in contact

with the endless majesty of Nature than they are nowadays. There were no saloon carriages to hurry them through it, and provide them with receptions and addresses at every railway station. Men who travelled, whether princes or bagmen, were for days and nights in solitary communion with Nature, and that braced their nerves and hardened their fibre. For a starlit night, with only endless fir-trees to cast their shadows between heaven and earth, would act as a better tonic for body and soul than most of the inventions with which our civilisation and philosophy seems desirous to replace them.

To us it appears only in consonance with the spirit of those days, when we read of a Russian Grand Duke refusing to accept a crown, which in his high-minded rectitude and unselfishness he thought rightly belonged to his elder brother. Yet history tells us that this was the Emperor Nicolas, a despot ruling autocratically over a barbarous people; with, however, no idea of profit and loss in personal matters: no snug investments and cheap *épanchements*!

Since then, *mémoires* have afforded us a glimpse of the inner life of the late German Emperor William, and the purity and simplicity of heart with which he yielded up the prospect of a life of happiness with the woman of his heart's choice to the call of duty. It is not the doing of it, but the simple way in which it was done, which shows old William a "pre-'48 bred" man.

All true sovereign natures have ever been simple

men, and we have increased the rarity of such in our own time by the insincerity of our whole life. That the Emperor Francis Joseph has remained one of the loyal, is a fact that redounds to his lasting honour and glory. No wonder is it, then, that his subjects are filled with intense anxiety for the future, when this man shall be no more.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NOBILITY*

Junge Grafen, die nichts lernen, seindt Ignoranten bei allen Landen. . . . Im Fal nun einmal ein Wunder geschehen und aus einem Grafen etwas werden solte, so mus er sich auf Titel und Geburth nichts einbilden, den das seind nur Narrenspossen sondern es kömt nur allezeit auf sein Mérite personnel an †

RESCRIPT OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

I

THE Austrian nobility is in one sense the only true and adequate representative now left of the powerful territorial aristocracies of past times.‡ Shorn of much of its political influence, and tending towards

* What follows deals more particularly with the nobility of the German Provinces of Austria, except when otherwise specified.

† Young counts who learn nothing are ignoramuses in all countries. . . . Were, however, some miracle to operate and a count to come to something, he must not on that account be conceited about his birth or title ; for these are only tomfooleries, and everything depends upon his personal merit.

‡ For instance, the possessions of Prince Liechtenstein are so extensive, that he employs a small army of 1100 gamekeepers and foresters on his Bohemian estate alone.

a greater decline still, it is yet socially paramount in the capital as well as patriarchally revered on its immense territorial possessions. "Our gracious Lord," "Prince," or "Count," as the case may be, is still approached with bended knee by the village cottager, who kisses the great landowner's hand while calling down blessings on his head. And after making every allowance for the possession of prestige and the vitality of tradition, there is a very natural explanation of all this. The Austrian noble still lives a life sufficiently luxurious to tend to make money circulate in the capital. Besides, there is a touch of patriarchal distinction and kind-heartedness left among the best scions of the Austrian nobility, which distinguishes them in their personal dealings from the rougher elements of the community.

In the country, particularly, many of this class have from time immemorial identified themselves with the interests of the population in a manner worthy of note. With us, plutocracy gains popularity and power by eleemosynary and social patronage, but many Austrian nobles have done a deal to encourage native industries, and that frequently at heavy pecuniary sacrifice to themselves. This has been notably the case with the great families of Bohemia. The Counts Rotenhan have been noted for over a century for their efforts to raise the iron industry of Bohemia, starting and managing iron works on their own account. In 1817 a Count Buquoy started a glass factory at Neuhaus. And in

er time the families of Harrach, Czernin, Beaufort
ve each been extensively engaged in the manu-
cture of glass, china, etc., and their undertakings
ve invariably been carried on in a generous spirit
anxiety for the welfare of the working population.
ere, too, is the patriarchal instinct still strong.

II

Revolutionary changes in political methods have
accordingly had hitherto little or no power to affect
the traditional conservatism of Austrian society.
The millionaire of no pedigree may stand aside and
sleep, for the feudal noble will take little notice of
him and his millions. Austria is in this unlike
other countries, where political evolution goes on hap-
pily concurrent with social emancipation, accompanied
by its lights and shades; the latter powerfully
represented by the triumph of money and vulgar
social ambition. "Money, money, if possible by
fair means; but money at any price!" Such is
daily becoming more and more the cry of aristocratic
Europe, as of democratic America.

It is not so very long ago that the beautiful
Sarah, Countess of Jersey, came to Vienna and found
to her surprise that there was a hitch in connection
with her being received by the aristocracy. Strange
to say, it was not on account of her supposed liaison
with the Prince Regent, but owing to the fact of
her sleeping partnership in Coutts' Bank that the

nobility hesitated to accept her on a footing of equality.

Austrian ideas of exclusion have doubtless been modified since then, yet even thirty years ago we find the American Minister in Vienna * writing the following: "If an Austrian should be Shakespeare, Galileo, Nelson and Raphael all in one, he couldn't be admitted into good society in Vienna unless he had the sixteen quarterings of nobility which birth alone could give him. Naturally, it is not likely to excite one's vanity that one goes as a *Minister* whereas as an individual he would find every door shut against him."

The recently deceased Lord Lytton, too, when attaché at Vienna, ventured one evening at Prince S.'s to suggest the fitness of attracting a small pinch of the intellectual salt of the country within the charmed circle of society. He only, however, earned from fair lips the frigid rejoinder: "*Mais, mon cher Lord, où voudriez-vous vous arrêter—on finirait donc par s'encanailler.*" †

Again, a certain *grande dame* of Austrian and French lineage (for the high aristocracy of the two countries have intermarried from time immemorial) was on one occasion taken down to dinner by a guest. Her conversational powers not being of a high order, he, after unsuccessfully starting

* "Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley." London. 1889. John Murray.

† *Anglice* :—"But, my dear Lord, where would you draw the line? We should end by landing ourselves in the gutter."

several topics of conversation, took the liberty of inquiring whether she might by chance be acquainted with Madame X., a lady whose name was well known in the international world of politics and letters. "Monsieur, c'est un autre monde,"* was the freezing reply.

III

It is a common saying in Austria, that *der Mensch, homo*: humanity only starts into being with the "Baron." In reality, however, the hallmark of the Austrian aristocratic world is the "Countess." In fact, the feeling for this hallmark is so strong that it develops into a species of Freemasonry in Vienna society, where a foreign Countess—even if hitherto a perfect stranger—will be at once received with open arms, and addressed in the intimacy of "Du" (thou). "Du gehörst ja zu uns!" ("Thou art one of us.") The wife of the highest official, on the other hand, though a full-blown Excellency, if she happen not to be of "sufficient birth," or perhaps "hardly born" at all, will never get beyond the barest outward civilities of social intercourse. Such a one will certainly not be admitted to the Freemasonic cordiality of the "Comtessen Zimmer"† at social gatherings. They will say of her: "Die gehört nit zu uns." ("She is not one of us.")

* "Sir, it is a different world you are referring to."

† *Anglice* :—"Countesses'-Room." Nickname for the apartment at social gatherings where the unmarried ladies congregate.

That in such an atmosphere a Prince S. should have characterised the marriage of one of his relatives with an untitled lady, as the one shameful blot (*Schandfleck*) on his escutcheon, is scarcely matter for surprise.

This innate pride is of old standing. It often called forth rebukes from the Emperor Joseph the Second, who, whatever his shortcomings as a ruler, had a healthy dislike for every form of undue pride and privilege. To a noble, who had given vent to his ideas regarding the persons he considered fit to associate with, the Emperor Joseph replied: "Why, if I, like you, wanted to mix only with my equals, I should have to go down into the Capucine vault [burial-place of the Habsburgs] to find them."

What the Emperor Joseph thought of some of the pretensions of the aristocracy the following letter will show.* It possesses a strong historical interest from the fact that, at the time it was written, the pretensions it castigates were universal, and that to-day the spirit which called it forth is still largely alive in Austria.

"To a Lady."

"MADAM,—I do not think that it is amongst the duties of a monarch to grant places to one of his subjects merely because he is a gentleman. That, however, is the inference to be drawn from the request you have made to me. Your late husband was, you say, a distinguished General, a gentleman

* See "Private Life of Marie Antoinette." Madame de Campan. London. Bentley.

of good family, and thence you conclude that my kindness to your family can do no less than give a Company of Foot to your second son, lately returned from his travels. Madam, a man may be the son of a General, and yet have no talent for command. A man may be of a good family, and yet possess no other merit than that which he owes to chance—the name of gentleman.

“I know your son, and I know what makes the soldier; and this twofold knowledge convinces me that your son has not the disposition of a warrior, and that he is too full of his birth to leave the country a hope of his ever rendering her any important service.

“What you are to be pitied for, Madam, is that your son is not fit either for an officer, a statesman, or a priest; in a word, that he is nothing more than a gentleman in the most extended acceptance of the word.

“You may be thankful to that destiny which, in refusing talents to your son, has taken care to put him in possession of great wealth, which will sufficiently compensate him for other deficiencies, and enable him at the same time to dispense with any favour from me.

“I hope you may be impartial enough to see the reasons which prompt me to refuse your request. It may be disagreeable to you, but I consider it necessary. Farewell, Madam.

“Your sincere well-wisher,

“JOSEPH.

“Lachsenburg, 4th August, 1787.”

This letter might have been written yesterday, for the failings of a class die hard, and that not in Austria alone. They sometimes even act as a blight on the community at large, merely from the ineradicable ape-like tendency of man to imitate his "betters."

The Austrian nobility must, therefore, be held more or less responsible for the creation and prevalence of the national type known as the "*Trottel*"—a type of pinched-brain dolt, something like what the Russians call the "*Krugom durak*," the all-round ninny—from the centre to the circumference solid in asinine qualities.

IV

We are told that at the time of the Vienna Congress, the sons of the great Austrian nobles of the age of thirteen to fourteen kept their mistresses publicly.

The worthy descendants of this parent stock are to be met with at the present day in both town and country. Prince X. suffers from phthisis of the spinal marrow, though in the prime of life. His castle is full of visitors, among them a fair sprinkling of lovely Countesses. What can be more amusing to them than the frolicsome gambols of his racing stud—a spectacle which brings a broad grin to his vacant, leering face. Or at another time he is alone, just risen from his bed. A crowd of officials have been waiting for hours to

be admitted to him. "Let them wait," says the princely *Trottel* as he trims his nails and smokes his cigarette; and they go on waiting for hours, merely that he may feel the pleasure of making them wait.

It is, however, mainly in the capital that the aristocratic *Trottel* finds his imitators and becomes lost amid their number. Here, as in other countries, the enervated sons of the wealthy middle class are only too eager to copy the vices of the aristocracy.

Whereas the English aristocratic "loafer" is generally physically robust, if not athletic, the Austrian *Trottel* is usually an effeminate-looking creature, with hair parted down the middle, a pinched low forehead, little eyes close together, sunk in his head, and a vacant grin, displaying aggressive teeth, set in a long, straight, narrow jaw. A dreadful type is this: an endless ocean of stupidity. One would never for a moment imagine him to be possessed of physical courage (which, however, is an attribute of all Austrians), for he tries his utmost to make you doubt it by wearing silver and gold bangles round his wrist. Unfortunately, it is rare that he possesses kind friends to save him in time. It was different with the English bangle-wearing subaltern who joined a well-known cavalry regiment (21st Hussars), and who was first advised, and then warned, to take the baubles off, but heeded not. One evening at mess, the colonel called to the servant: "Bring the champagne nippers"; and off went the bangles.

The *Trottell* has no idea of the value of money, he is always letting it slip through his fingers. He is partly answerable for the dreadful prevalence of backsheesh, commonly called "tips" in Austria, and the impertinence of waiters and cab-drivers in Vienna. A paper florin is nothing to give to a cabman as a gratuity beyond his legal fare. In fact, the Vienna or Budapesth cabs afford a convenient vehicle for the *Trottell* to get rid of his money. For he is partial to horses, from the racer to the cab-horse. It is nothing unusual for him to fool away four to five pounds a day in cabs. This is how it is done. He orders a cab after breakfast, and drives out to be shaved; keeps the cab waiting, forgets it, and takes another one; and so on, half a dozen times through the day. Before going to the theatre, he reads his paper in the *café*, but he can't take his little lap-dog, "*Krukerl*," with him to the theatre, so sends him home in one cab, and takes another himself to the theatre. Next morning he is surprised to find half a dozen cabmen each claiming a whole day's fare from him. If this amusement should pall, there is another variety ready to hand. The *Trottell* will make a bet that he will beat the express train to Vöslau with one of the noted Viennese two-horse cabs (*fiacres*).

The same type is also to be met with at times in Viennese family life of a certain class, that of the wealthy banker or shady noble. Some of these entertain a constant stream of seedy retainers, who are to be found in their houses at all times of the

day and night. There the military or noble *Trottels* is to be seen along with weak representatives of literature, of the arts and sciences; authors whose books do not sell, doctors without practice, painters without commissions; in short, failures in every walk of life.

Among these the host has his "*Spezi*,"* and the lady of the house her supposed favourite. But it is difficult to get at the exact relationship of the set towards one another; for in that section of society the husband is usually of an amiable type, only too glad if Madame pleases herself, so long as she does not interfere with his easy-going habits.

It is among this class of loafers that the *habitués* of the numerous Turkish Baths of Vienna and Budapesth are to be found, who spend half the day in these institutions lying on their backs.

V

Among so imitative a people as the Austrians, the *Trottels* is of more far-reaching perniciousness than he would be in harder climes, where the necessity of "doing something" forces similar elements to work or emigrate, and thus to get out of the way. The responsibility accordingly which the aristocracy incurs by continually reproducing him, is not a slight matter. In fact, it is said that it is partly owing to the prevalence of the *Trottels* that

* Slang term for special chum.

the cosmopolitan nincompoop of good social standing feels himself so much at home in Austrian society; for, indeed, nowhere is he more so.

The nobility is also largely answerable for the ominous spread of horse-racing and betting in Austria-Hungary. If the Austrian aristocratic dolt cannot assimilate the West European virtue of work, surely his patriotism might prevent him from introducing the British turf and its demoralising associations into Austria.

It only wants a sufficient diffusion of betting in Austria to change the picturesque, cleanly dressed Austrian crowd into as foul a swarming mass of colourless ooze as any English drunken race-course mob. The Austrians, by their traditional easy-going love of pleasure, are quite sufficiently handicapped already in the struggle for life among the nations, without being inoculated with social diseases which are indigenous to other countries. Such had best be left to die out in due course there, where a more powerful racial vitality only allows them to act as a gentle surface irritant. But among the Austrians betting is a dangerous innovation. Yes, compared to this foul Upas-tree, the Austrian State lotteries are indeed wells of national thrift and virtue! It is therefore to be hoped that this new vice may not spread and tend to weaken the stamina of the fine old, but simple-minded, Austrian stock,

VI

Sometimes the vices of a class may even cause the extinction of a nation, as was the case with the Polish nobility. The actual shortcomings of the Austrian nobility seem to foreshadow its own ultimate downfall, and with it the eclipse of the German race in Austria, of which it ought to be the rightful leader.

How, indeed, can the Austrian nobility expect to lead, either politically, intellectually, or morally?

No doubt it is still a great social advantage to be born a Metternich, a Colloredo, or an Auersperg. But, except as regards social recognition, the old privileges of the Austrian nobility have been singularly curtailed since the unfortunate campaign of 1866. Now that universal compulsory military service goes hand in hand with a searching system of examination in every department of the public service, chivalry and a great historic name, without brains, are said to be no longer sufficient to secure high place and power in Austria. Therefore the nobility is thrown back upon its own intellectual and moral worth: too often a poor vantage ground.

Unlike the Prussian junker, who is at least usually forced to learn something and do something, the Austrian nobles rarely learn much, and still more rarely work. They prefer to sulk and hide themselves under their genealogical tree in sullen disdain. They still possess a child-like faith in

genealogical trees; a faith which is, unfortunately, not shared by those outside its umbrage. For the nobility do not count many adherents outside their own charmed circle. Even the traditions of martial valour cannot lend a halo to their past in the sympathies of the population. A noble was always ready to fight, but that was no distinction among a warlike people such as the Austrians. Unfortunately, he was hardly ever fitted to lead, either in the field or in the Council. He generally blundered,* and only yesterday pursued one of Austria's finest soldier types—General Benedek—with his petty jealousy, because he did not come of an old narrow-foreheaded stock. It is not therefore surprising that the noble stands practically alone. He may adorn his visiting cards, his letter-paper, with his gorgeous coronet and coat-of-arms; to the people these only mean so much ornamental stationery. The feeling that would prompt anybody to value an article because it belonged to a great noble, a feeling not unknown in highly civilised communities, does not exist in the Realm of the Habsburgs.

VII

How, indeed, can the Austrian nobles "lead" with ideas that keep them aloof from the whole intellectual life of the country? They generate no

* How many Austrian defeats have been brought home to the wilful stupidity of their aristocratic leaders!

intellectual life among themselves, and the current literature of the country, being mostly Liberal, they do not read. Of course there are exceptions to this, and it cannot be said of the Hungarian nobility; but the fact that the following anecdote could possess any point whatever is significant.

Count L., a well-known member of the Herren House, recently hailed a cab, and told the driver to take him to Gerold's book store (the principal bookseller in Vienna). Cabby looked puzzled, and frankly admitted that he did not know the shop in question.

"What," ejaculated Count L., annoyed, "you pretend to be a Vienna cab-driver and you do not know Gerold's?"

Half in apology and half in a tone of wounded dignity, the cabman replied: "Your lordship must excuse me, but I am only in the habit of driving gentlemen."

Yes, so thoroughly is the Austrian nobility out of touch with an intellectual life worth calling such, that when some few among them endeavour to remedy this, the result, with very few exceptions, is deplorable. In fact, it is sometimes almost amusing to note the efforts which the nobility make to do violence to their prejudices and recognise "intellect" in a patronising kind of manner. It means simply the gathering together of a collection of mediocrities of every profession.

A Viennese professor, or any other man of intellect worth his salt, will not be patronised by

the pinched-forehead, and the society of such is not good enough for him. We may admire the pride which disdains to accept the vulgar money-bag or the clever self-seeker on terms of equality. For all that, however, the excess to which this pride is carried harbours a danger; for it keeps the nobility estranged from influential and worthy sections of the community, and drives the latter into the camp of the enemy. Thus, such careers as that of the late Mr. W. H. Smith, who was recently First Lord of the Treasury in England, or that of Lord Beaconsfield, would be impossible in Austria. Female influence alone would prevent men of that stamp ever being accepted and throwing in their lot with that of the aristocracy of the country.

How different is it, on the other hand, with our enlightened and far-sighted aristocratic methods! The English nobility always welcomed talent, and now and then—to its honour be it said—character. It eagerly draws to its bosom wealth, the great lever of power, from whatever source derived. And this is why the English nobility still leads, and succeeds in making the middle classes gratefully worship it for its condescension. The feudal fetish which the English nobility, with praiseworthy acumen, has long relegated to the lumber-room for more practical ideals, has found a congenial resting-place in the lap of the middle classes.

Only lately the most democratic representative municipal assembly in England figuratively wept, because, after touting the peerage of Great Britain,

it was unable to procure a "Lord" to preside over its deliberations.

The Austrian nobleman might well envy this state of things ; but it would be as difficult to explain this kind of sentiment to the unsophisticated Austrian townsman, as to prove to him how much of the stability of our social and political institutions has been due to it ! Even in a free country, a healthy reverence for birth and position on the part of the middle classes is less subversive than the rancour of the plebeian.

CHAPTER IX

THE NOBILITY—(*continued*)

Audiatur et altera pars

I

IT has been a fortunate circumstance for the Austrian nobility in the past that class exigencies often found some healthy dilution through the political nature of things, otherwise the percentage of enervated dullards among it would probably be far greater than it is.

In times gone by, the sceptre of the Habsburg counted Italians, Spaniards, Belgians, Lorrainers under its allegiance. The martial nobles of these different countries used to come to Austria; often married there, and thus mingled their warlike blood with that of the aristocratic home-born Austrian element

When Austria proper upheld the cause of Catholicism, either against the Reformation, the Turks, or, still later on, against Protestant Prussia, the adventurous, penniless, but sword-bearing sons of many Catholic countries, soldiers of fortune, came swarming

promiscuously to Austria, and again intermarried with the Austrian nobility. And thus, while we find many Protestant Scotch and French Huguenot names in Prussia, in Austria we find a long register of Irish Catholic names, such as Lacy, Skene, O'Donnell, Butler, etc. The present Prime Minister, Count Taaffe, for instance, is not only of Irish descent, but is an Irish peer to boot. X

In fact, the register of the Austrian nobility has quite an internationally European complexion. The Princes Rohan point to Brittany; the Princes Mensdorff-Pouilly, the Counts Dampierre, the Bouquoy, to France; the Hoyos to Spain; the Princes Croy, the Counts Fiquelmont to Belgium; the Dukes of Beaufort-Spontin to Lorraine; the Princes Odescalchi, Clasy, Montenuovo, the Counts Palavicini, Bianchi, Paar, Montecuculli, and many others to Italy. Moreover, the aristocratic population of Austria itself has long had nearer home, in the Hungarian, the Polish, the Northern Italian aristocratic element, a large variety of noble blood with which to renovate itself, and thus to counteract the ill effects so often seen in princely houses of too close intermarriage.

No wonder is it, then, that the Austrian aristocracy is noted for the courage of its men and the proud spirit of its women, seeing that the chivalry of half Europe has united to produce them.

II

With the possession of a proud spirit, the Austrian aristocracy has long combined a great simplicity and charm of manner, even at times when aristocratic manners generally were scarcely a model of refinement for others. Thus, an English traveller, writing from Vienna in the year 1779,* after describing the patriarchal simplicity reigning in the household of Prince Kaunitz (the Prime Minister of the Empress Maria Theresa), has the following :

“ Nearly an equal freedom reigns at Prince Coloredo’s,† who, surrounded by his numerous sons, daughters, and their descendants or connections, unites to the utmost simplicity of manners all the finished breeding of a courtier and a gentleman. Everything conduces to put a foreigner at his ease, and insensibly to divest him of the awkwardness or embarrassment natural on finding himself in the midst of a society with whose habits and common topics of conversation he is unacquainted.”

There seems to be little variation between the above and the following extract from Motley, who wrote in our own time :

“ Nothing can be more charming than the manners of the Austrian aristocracy, both male and female. It is perfect nature combined with high

* “Memoirs of the Courts of Europe.” N. W. Wraxall. London, 1800.

† Vice-Chancellor of Joseph the Second, German Emperor.

breeding. A characteristic of it is the absence of that insolence on the one side, and of snobbishness on the other, which are to be found in nearly all other societies."

It is perhaps only natural that Motley, as a refined American, should appreciate and dwell with predilection on qualities he was not likely to find omnipresent at home. X

And this is how he seeks to explain what he admires :

" This arises from the fact that the only passport to the upper society is pedigree, an unquestionable descent on both sides of the house from nobility of many generations."

But it seems to us that those halcyon conditions are not so much directly owing to the purity of the double-barrelled pedigree (for that is doubtless to some extent responsible for the retreating forehead and the vacant dull eye) as to natural conditions, simplicity of life, resulting in simplicity of manner, and both reflecting true breeding. The same might exist in every society in which self-respect, independence of character, and good social education prevail. In fact, history proves that such conditions have before now existed even in Republics.

III

There is nothing to be got in Austrian society by self-seeking servility, and nothing to be feared

by politeness being misinterpreted; not even the suspicion of wishing to borrow a five-pound note. Hence a certain general *empressement* to treat every one on an equal footing, to expand and exchange our best thoughts—such as they are—impartially. One must have seen this spontaneous instinct at work in order to judge how simplicity of manner can gild even poverty of matter. It is this *empressement* which leads an Austrian guest, as soon as he enters a room, to solicit the honour of being introduced ail round. It is considered an act of obligatory courtesy which is part of good manners, and open to no misinterpretation. Everybody present being equal in the only thing each values—birth—tuft-hunting and toadying are *per se* non-existent; there is no telling who is the lion. There is absolute equality excepting in the deference shown to old age and beauty. This prevents an amiability of manner being interpreted as a desire to curry favour, for there are no perquisites to be gained by toadying.

As money is not required in Austria to uphold your position, there is no necessity for keeping up the outward appearance of wealth. Poverty being no slur or disqualification, there is no necessity to cut your poor relations in order to set your own status in relief. There is nothing to prevent the penniless, well-born lieutenant, with merely a coat to his back, from retaining a full sense of his dignity when entering the drawing-room of the immensely wealthy Liechtenstein or Eszterhazy: he

does not want anything. Strange, that the sunshine of Imperial favour itself is powerless to turn even the poor nobility into degraded courtiers. It is to the honour of the Austrian-Hungarian that the social grin, the apish curvature of the spine, engendered by high social patronage in some countries, is non-existent in his society. There is no necessity to half-mast the flag of self-respect, if you happen to be poor.

Now, all this does away with the dreadful feeling of *fausse honte* which makes a new-comer in many other places, unless he come endowed with a cynical appreciation of the average mediocrity of those he meets, stand aside and bore himself to death whilst incense-burning of the most vulgar description is going on around the social lion. But how is one to get over one's instinctive nervousness when introduced to a Cotton or Beer Lord! You are a poor author whose books are not read, a penniless inventor, a clergyman anxious for preferment, or what not; in other words, a nobody with no connections. There stands a piece of beef, "worth" £50,000 a year, whose smile, ay, whose nod, may enable you to get on and become *somebody*; probably a poor kite at best, but at least to be seen and gaped at by the many, if it only be for a few moments. How keep that little flutterer from beating, and how retain the upright position of a free-born man, when standing within a few inches of the article that may help you to "get on"! There you are before one who has everything—to give; you

have everything—to receive ! Where can equality, independence, and dignity come in here ?

IV

In connection with, if not a direct outcome of, the charm of simplicity already referred to, is the strong sense of chivalry which has managed to survive among the best Austrian-Hungarian nobility, as in great measure among Austrians generally. It is outwardly visible in the natural and distinguished bearing, particularly characteristic of the Hungarian magnate. To see these handsome men in their picturesque costumes—booted, spurred, and glittering in their gems—gather in the presence of their Sovereign, either at Budapesth or at a *levée* in the Imperial Hofburg in Vienna, is to witness a sight to be remembered. No fussy restlessness to catch an august eye, no knock-kneed servility pervades this assembly ; there is a manly, dignified repose among these men which is natural to them : something unspoilt, as if from past ages. You realise that they are the direct descendants of those who in 1741 drew their swords in defence of their Empress-Queen to the cry : *Vitam et sanguinem pro majestate vestra*.* And we believe they still possess the grand old virtue of devotion, even when no perquisites, no *κνδὸς*, no sticks, rods, crosses, stars, or crowns are to be expected in return—not even a

* " Our lives and our blood for your Majesty's cause."

paltry eulogistic leading article in the oracle of the hour. The eternal moral value of this antiquated virtue seems to increase in proportion, as we bear in mind that it has only too often been rendered without hope of gain or recognition.

It would appear to be only natural that such men should still attach a supreme value to qualities which in olden times were the *only ones* prized by the high and the humble alike: chivalrous courage and devotion. In fact, we are assured, that in pre-'66 days, a deal of the *froideur* which Austrian society felt for Prussia, was to be traced to a suspicion among the Austrian nobility that the Prussian officer was, after all, only a parade soldier, and second-rate even at that. For the Prussians had had no wars since 1815, whereas they, the Austrians, had had a continuous fighting record, more or less, down to our times. The experiences of 1866 and 1870-71 have changed this feeling towards the Prussians, who are now regarded with respect, and even admiration; for the Austrian knows from experience that the Prussian, too, is a genuine fighting man, and a chivalric one like himself. This sentiment of respect the Austrian nobleman gives vent to in the terse expression: "Olle Ochtung." ("All Honour.")

Where there is a doubt on this vital point, he is apt to be a trifle suspicious, and to give way to prejudice. This has even been known to show itself in unpleasant chaff and banter at the expense of the

amiable military attaché of a great but peaceful Power. He owed his appointment to high and mighty influence; but that was of no weight in his surroundings at Vienna. He was constantly asked where he had seen fire, as poor old Cetewayo used to ask us at home to show him our fighting men. The said military attaché, wounded in his vanity, wrote to the Home authorities, and begged to be sent under fire—even if only to be shot at by the bows and arrows of niggers; but at any rate, for God's sake, to be "potted" somehow!

It must be confessed that titles, wealthy connections, nepotism, and money can still do a deal in Austria, as elsewhere. But neither they, nor the mere sartorial appendages of a uniform, with a few complimentary crosses thrown in, are enough to command the respect, much less to gain the sympathies, of aristocratic fighting Austria. Martial prowess, physical courage beyond the breath of suspicion—not the mere sporting variety thereof—is still a *sine qua non* condition of acceptance there.

It is easy enough for us in these democratic days to smile at some of these old-fashioned sentiments. Yet, with all their harshnesses, to us there is still a ring of character within them. It may be "anti-quoted," "narrow," "illogical," and yet it is of that "something" which in the long run will always tell its eloquent tale in the affairs of man.

V

The Austrian aristocrat still reveres the *old* conceptions of personal and family honour. In reference to the former, his code may not be ours, but there can be no doubt that he strictly adheres to it.

Some years ago an Austrian of the highest rank was struck in public by another member of the nobility, whose private life, it was said, would not bear investigation. Prince A. declined to meet his insulter; on the plea that he was not *satisfaktionsfähig*—i.e., not a fit person with whom to cross swords. Now, in some countries where duelling exists, this latter circumstance would exonerate a gentleman from the obligation of meeting such an opponent. However, on the case being referred to the Emperor, he decided that the Prince, having been struck in public, the dignity of his class exacted that the duel should take place. In the result, Prince A. was shot dead, and his opponent fled the country.

It will be readily understood that in such an atmosphere there is no sentimental consideration for those who have been found wanting. There is no living down a slur on individual honour in feudal Austria, be it a case of cowardice or cheating at cards. So, too, it is only fair to admit, there is no mean clinging to life when once all that makes it worth living has been forfeited: suicide is the not unusual consequence, even of so venial a social sin, in our eyes, as hopeless indebtedness!

It may also be added that these antiquated notions still find general acceptance among, and are put into practice by, the citizen class in Austria as in Germany. They account for no small percentage of the suicides in both countries.

VI

Another strange sensitiveness with regard to family pride may perhaps be worth noting. The Austrian noble, who has a family tradition of any consequence, would almost as soon think of flying, or of breaking his pledged word of honour, as of letting his ancestral home to strangers. It is only the emasculated Roman nobility who do such things abroad. The idea that strangers should roam at will among his heirlooms—his ancestors, perhaps, looking down on them from the walls; much more, sleep in the same bed in which his children had been born to him, has something degrading, if not revolting, in his eyes. It would seem to him to be an indecent mockery of the sentiment he has in his heart, if not ever on his lips, that "his house is *indeed* his castle." He is told that others do it and think nothing of it, but on this point the Austrian nobleman is not to be brought up to the standard of modern ideas. He does not care what others "think"; it is enough for him that he "feels" it to be degrading. He prefers any alternative to this one! And, from an aristocratic point of view, it is difficult to blame him.

It may be taken as a fitting exemplification of this want of adaptability, that the Austrian nobility still refuse to accept the famous dictum of the Emperor Vespasian, which Juvenal has immortalised in one of his satires :

"Lucri bonus est odor ex re
Qualibet."*

The Austrian noble has somehow mixed up this *gran rifiuto* of his with his code of honour, and abides by it, even when it might be of advantage to him to waive his objections. Nay, it has led him before now to run the risk of offending amiable foreign Royalty rather than receive a man whose immense wealth could not blind them to the fact that its origin was, to say the least, suspicious.

It is to be regretted that Counts A. and F. should on such an occasion have lost sight of a great point of etiquette—viz., that it was no business of theirs whom Royalty wished to honour. They had evidently forgotten that acceptance by Royalty covers all and everybody who enjoys the privilege of being honoured by its favour. At the same time, we must temper our indignation against these noble but wild sons of the *puszta* by the thought that, with all their lack of etiquette, they had the courage to "draw the line" even in the face of Royalty! It is difficult not to sympathise with men who have yet retained this capacity to

* "The smell of gain is good, wherever it may come from" (Juvenal, 14, 204).

"draw the line." There is a ring of character about it, though of course far from such as we should like to see imitated.

VII

As has been already pointed out, the political influence of the Austrian nobility is hemmed by its prejudices and its lack of energy. The noble has no idea of the value of co-operation, of founding syndicates to buy up millions of acres of land in distant countries: he possesses little enterprise. But it is only fair to add that other qualities besides prevent him from "getting on," and that these reflect credit on his rigid sense of honour and pride.

Although the Austrian, and particularly the Hungarian, nobleman is said to have easy notions regarding the sacredness of the Seventh Commandment, he can point to scruples which do not always exist in other countries where the Seventh Commandment is held as sacred as the altar of a Buddhist temple is held in India.

We are assured that no well-bred Austrian aristocrat, no officer of rank, however poor, would up to recently have dreamt of allowing his name to be used as a decoy-duck to gild the prospectus of a bogus company. Much less would he consent to accept money for so doing. It *would* not do to prophesy that he may not come to that; but we are assured that he had not come to it up to a recent

date. Down to the present, the hard strain of poverty has not been able to dull the fine edge of honour which has ever characterised this class.

Instances to the contrary are, of course, on record; such as the tragic one in which a Staff officer of the Archduke Charles was caught *in flagrante delicto* selling the Austrian plan of campaign (1809) to the French ambassador. But, then, exceptions only prove the rule, and in this case prompt suicide expiated the sin.

VIII

That an indifference to pelf, even in its less objectionable forms, is traditional among the Austrian aristocracy, would appear from the fact that the remuneration for the highest State offices was always merely nominal, as it is still to-day. A wealthy Austrian noble is thus not to be tempted to accept highly salaried Court sinecures. He is not to be tempted by the garlicky smell of the "fleshpots." Perhaps another reason of this being the case might be, that the highest social positions do not necessitate large expenditure for appearance sake. Even the highest appointments, either to place or orders, involve no payment of fees: at most, a decent dress-coat or regulation uniform.

The significance of this general indifference to wages in their broader sense will be best understood by an illustration from English history. William Pitt devoted his life to the service of his

country, asked for nothing in return, and received nothing, except undying fame. His friend Lord Mornington, on being appointed Governor-General of British India, asked for a peerage on account of future services to be rendered.* He received it, and, later on, a further addition to his title, with which, in the true spirit of the huckster, he was dissatisfied. Now, in the estimation of the best Austrian nobleman, Pitt was *the* aristocrat, and Lord Mornington a mere clever titled self-seeker: a jobber, in the sense of the cobbler or tailor, insisting on being paid by the job; a sartorial man worthy to have lived and flourished at a later period, when loftiness of character had come to be a less necessary ingredient in an aristocrat.

It is to the honour of the Austrian noble that, unlike Lord Mornington, he is above begging for a rise in his wages.

IX

With the universal introduction of telegraphs, the importance of diplomatic appointments has so much diminished that the best talent of aristocracies no longer finds scope therein for their energies. The qualifications required are mostly of a negative kind, and here the Austrian noble still shines. Even when suffering from a lack of intellectual vigour, he

* See "Pitt," by Lord Rosebery. London: Macmillan. Pp. 213-217.

generally represents the essence of good breeding, which, strange to say, is sometimes more useful than a world of trickery.

It is true that some Austrian diplomatists have been outwitted, have shown undue self-sufficiency, whilst others have ruined themselves by their splendid representative hospitality, or gambled away princely fortunes. An ambassador in our time is even said to have committed suicide under undignified circumstances; but none, to our knowledge, has ever condescended to play the lackey of his own self-advertisement in order to gain popularity or trumpety additions to his name.

An old Austrian family hardly ever exchanges its name. Like the members of some few old English untitled families, the Austrian noble is unconscious that any brand-new name could add to that by which his family has been known honourably in the camp and the Cabinet for generations. The innate feeling of his dignity as an *Edelmann*, which is instilled into him in youth, prevents him in after-life from condescending to unworthy tricks in order to advertise himself to a public for whom he has little regard. Thus those scions of the Austrian nobility who are selected to represent their Sovereign at foreign Courts, accept their appointment because of the honour of the thing. They do not look upon it so much in the light of a "good thing" to be cunningly worked by the aid of a generously appreciative press for their own self-glorification and advancement. They hear it is

an excellent idea to try to "get on"; but somehow they are apt to lose sight of its imperative necessity. They possess a peculiar code of conduct of their own, in which the tendency to administer moral lectures to others, or the pernicious methods of the busybody, are not included.

Austrian ambassadors and diplomatists in general are not continually dying to catch the eye of superior officials or of the public. They do not suffer from the disease known as a chronic condition of *trop de zèle* for their own worldly interest and advancement. And this happy lack of *trop de zèle* prevents them from making themselves obnoxious to the Ministerial authorities at home as well as to those of the countries to which they are accredited. They do not bustle to gain the royal "ear" nor do they carry on thankless Court intrigues. The Austrian nobleman feels himself above these things: he courts no favour even among the highest, and thus he invariably succeeds in being respected and trusted as a gentleman.

What a blessing these negative virtues of the Austrian diplomatist are to the authorities at home! —a fact which can only be realised by those who have an inkling of what a perfect misery the life of Foreign Secretaries is sometimes made in countries where other standards and ideals obtain!

At the present day all aristocracies of birth are on the decline. Those only that succeed in surviving as cunning plutocracies may continue to play an important part in the life of nations. Those

who remain true to their antiquated ideals of honour are likely to gradually disappear. Their virtues will live on, at most, like those of the heathen philosophers of Alexandria, in the memory of the student of human character.

CHAPTER X

THE ARMY

Militavit non sine gloria!

I

It is not so long ago since the Austrian soldier was the subject of extravagant admiration on the part of Continental travellers.

An Englishman,* writing from Austria in the year 1851, says :

“A finer set of men will not easily be met with. Their frank and just appreciation of the good qualities of opponents, their own self-possessed and unboastful bearing would do honour to any army. Cheerful in adverse chances and ungasconading in triumph.

“It was pleasant to remark with what respect they spoke of the bravery of the Hungarians, and with what cordiality they admired the military genius of Görgey.† . . . At one period, when there was some expectation of capturing him, a saying of

* “Letters from Italy and Vienna.” Cambridge, 1852.

† Prominent General of the Hungarian rebellion of 1849.

General Wohlgemuth's was in every one's mouth : that if he were taken prisoner, they would have a difficult question to decide—whether to hang him, or to make him a Field-Marshal."

II

Both before and after those troublous days, there was a halo of romance clinging round the Austrian soldier; and it often acted as a stimulus on the adventurous of other countries to flock by preference to Austria's standard. Some of us can still remember the Italian campaign of 1859, when many competent judges thought the Austrian army would prove more than a match for the French. And, perhaps, such would have been the case had her troops been properly led.

In those days, and even afterwards, something tangible and picturesque of military Austria could be seen without even crossing her frontier. There was a gleam of chivalry connected with those snow-white uniforms, which relieved the dull monotony of the sleepy streets of some German garrison town. We had heard of the prowess of the Austrian soldiers in Italy, in 1849, when under the leadership of their renowned Field-Marshal Radetzky, whose glory was proclaimed to the world by the soul-stirring strains of the famous Radetzky March, they had re-established Austrian rule in Lombardy. But although victory had given way to defeat on those same plains of Lombardy, in the year 1859, still tales

had come to us of the splendid Austrian artillery, of cavalry which had not been allowed to retrieve the fortunes of the fateful day of Solferino; and, lastly, of the fierce Borderers (*Grenzer*) who guarded Austria's eastern frontier. Above all, tradition had twined its wreaths of laurel round the brows of the sturdy Tyrolese sharp-shooters, whose leaders, amid the din and smoke of battle, had snatched the short rifle from the soldier's hand, and with unerring aim picked off the gaudy-uniformed French officer. Were we not even told that it was one of the forefathers of these same Tyrolese sharp-shooters, who, drafted into the navy of the first Napoleon, fired the fatal shot that laid England's heroic Nelson low? This splendid corps, among others, had just come back bronzed from the sunny south. And of an evening, in their barracks, they could be heard singing the song which owed its origin to the bloody day of Magenta :

"Am Tage von Magenta,
Grub man ein grosses Grab."

It was a sight to see these representatives of warlike chivalry, everywhere honoured for their valour even when unfortunate, mounting the mid-day guard, with flying colours, drums beating, and their splendid band in full performance. Emphasised is all this as a memory to-day,* now that the bands attached to many regiments no longer exist.

* Regimental bands are abolished in all Austrian cavalry regiments.

Again, in 1866, public opinion favoured the chances of Austria. That there was some foundation for this, the stubborn fight on the heights of Chlum* (against the needle-gun) abundantly proved. And here let the significant fact be borne in mind, that, except the Danes in 1864, the Austrians are the only European troops who have faced a vastly better-armed foe in our time.

Surely this sympathy and this perennial faith in the prowess of Austria, from so many sides, notwithstanding the crushing, historical record of military disaster, is one of the highest testimonies to the chivalric fighting qualities of the Austrian soldier.

III

The peculiar chivalric instinct of military (and civil) Austria was recently instanced on the occasion of Count Moltke's death, when men of every rank and party vied with one another in honouring the memory of their great antagonist. And, more recently still, the exhumation of the body of the French Cavalry General, Lassalle,[†] was another

* Part of the battlefield of Sadowa. The splendid manner in which the Austrian artillerymen worked their guns on this occasion, not only excited the admiration of the enemy, but, we are assured by competent authority, had no parallel among the French during the whole war of 1870-71.

† Antoine Charles Louis, Comte de Lassalle, fell at the battle of Wagram, 1809. Buried in the St. Marx Cemetery, near Vienna; exhumed and transported to France, 23rd September 1891.

instance of this quality. The Emperor himself met the funeral *cortège* on its way to the railway station. There the Imperial Archdukes, Albrecht and Wilhelm, joined the party, which consisted of the Minister of War, many of the highest officials, every full General in Vienna at the time, and several hundred Staff and Field officers. And as the coffin was lifted into the train, to the strains of the Funeral March of Beethoven, *Sulla morte d'un Eroe*, they all united to pay the last tribute of respect to the ashes of a dead warrior, enemy though he had been in life.

The dare-devil dash of the renowned Austrian-Hungarian cavalry is only in accord with these old-fashioned chivalric traditions. In truth, there is little difference between these men to-day and their warlike ancestors. The barbaric love of a little martial sport—a *Bissel Raufen*—is strong within them still. An Austrian cavalryman, when asked what he thought of some modern military reforms, replied: "*Ach was*: we don't worry our brains about these things. I have nobody in this world to care about. Only let *it* begin (*es losgehen*); you will see all will go well."

Whether about to go to victory, and thence to don a few tinsel laurel wreaths and be trotted round a circus to the applause of an admiring throng, or whether destined to go into battle and verify the beautiful old German war song:

"Gestern noch auf stolzen Rossen,
Heute durch die Brust geschossen,
Morgen in das kühle Grab," *

this is a mere detail to the men who compare with the mediæval fighting heroes portrayed to us in Schiller's "Wallenstein" and Körner's "Zriny."

IV

And the barbaric courage of olden times remains a typical characteristic of militant Austria. This is, perhaps, the reason why, although she has no record of such a spiritual uplifting of the nation as that of Prussia in 1813, Austria has, on the other hand, never known a disaster such as Jena.† It seems to be an undefined law that, when a highly civilised nation suffers defeat, it experiences a more complete collapse than does, under similar circumstances, a comparatively backward one. The latter always retains more of the primeval combativeness resulting from the contact of her people with the soil—*à fortiori* if backed by strong loyalty to the Sovereign, as was exemplified by Russia in 1812, and by Austria throughout her history. This is indeed a significant fact.

* "Yesterday on prancing chargers ; to-day with a bullet through the heart ; to-morrow in the chilly grave."

† Against this it is only fair to state, that the alertness of mind throughout the whole military body that could make a battle of Leuthen possible, has never existed in Austria. Only homogeneous races have ever been able to show such results.

There is much also about the fighting element in Austria which must have an attraction for such of us as love the true ring of chivalrous human nature. Beaten by the great Napoleon in a hundred fights, her soldiers ever came up unflinchingly on the morrow to do or die—more often the latter. No misfortune, no hardship, nothing could tear them from their allegiance. Patiently, steadfastly, they withstood the rattle of musketry, the whistling “ping” of the bullet hurrying to its billet, the bursting of the searching grenade. Like all races largely of Teutonic blood, they ever met the grim destiny of battle with *decency*, without developing the wild beast. They never tore off their officers’ epaulets, or shrieked themselves hoarse for a victim—a traitor—a scapegoat!

They may, they do, lack the initiative of the more versatile Gaul, but they possess devotion, and in nothing is this better seen than in the uniform excellence of their artillery and the quiet steadfastness with which they man their guns. The significance of this military virtue can best be understood when we bear in mind the mechanical details of the service of artillery. There can be no self-advertisement here, for the manning of cannon does not easily admit of such; nor is there any instance of what we term sentimental heroism, such as carrying wounded men out of range, and getting out of range yourself in so doing. No, stick to your guns, is the order of the day. How full of meaning are these words! If we are not very much mistaken, too, this

trait will tell its eloquent tale, whenever and wherever nations meet again in the shock of battle (*die Völker auf einander schlagen*). Then will the quiet, devoted gunner again prove his value.

Now, although those "silent Russians" of Carlyle's are well accredited in this particular, it occurs to us that it is also a general characteristic of the "Germanic race" (speaking in the widest sense of the term), and as such may call for a few words outside the strict limits of these pages. The North Americans, too—largely of Anglo-Teutonic stock—have always worked their guns well.

In our own history, too, we need but recall Nelson's half-naked gunners, and their quiet eagerness to get alongside the enemy—the unerring aim of those broadsides which sounded the death-knell of many a Spanish three-decker. This was long ago, before their descendants had forsaken the work of war to place their lives in the service of peace. The fishermen, mostly off the Scottish coast, who face the ocean all the year round and bring home seven millions' worth of fish annually from its depths; the toilers who delve into the bowels of the earth, and bring up its produce to be smelted in the furnaces of Middlesborough and Lancashire—these are England's fighting men now, for she has no others in such numbers. And this seems to us the power that makes England great: this capacity of transferring, adapting, and translating the faithful, silent energy of manning guns into the Cyclopean and persistent labours of peace.

It is this power of *intelligently* adapting warlike devotion of war to the ends of excellence in peace and war, which is in fact the most prominent task awaiting military as well as civil Austria. Devotion alone can no longer be trusted efficiently to do the work of the future.

V

Those who have followed up the occasional notes of warning which have been uttered from time to time, with ever-recurring persistence, with regard to Austrian military matters, may well ask themselves the following question :

How comes it that specialists are continually carping at an army, which before '59, and again prior to '66, was thought by some good judges to be the best in Europe, and which has admittedly been thoroughly reorganised, and, presumably, vastly improved since those days ? It is because, even if they have improved, the requirements (*Anforderungen*) which are now called for, are believed to have increased out of all proportion to such improvement.

The Austrian army and its unit, the Austrian soldier, could and did fairly take first rank in the past, down to the last days of professional armies. For throughout this past, Austrian defeats can almost invariably be traced to other causes than to a lack of prowess in her soldiers. It was always rather a lack of uniform leadership and a lack of

capable leaders that brought disaster to her troops. It was their vice of procrastination which caused the first Napoleon to say: "*Ces messieurs d'Autriche sont toujours en retard, d'une année d'une armée, d'une idée.*" How recently and how seriously defects of discipline were still to be met with, may be gathered from the fact that at the battle of Sadowa two Austrian Archdukes* positively refused obedience to General von Benedek, the commander-in-chief.

Whenever Austria possessed good leaders, victory invariably followed her standard; as witness the victories of Wallenstein and Prince Eugène of Savoy. Even when pitted against the greatest of captains, Frederick the Great, a Field-Marshal Daun led the Austrian soldiers to victory. An Archduke Charles, too, it was who scored the bloody day of Aspern, Napoleon's first defeat. And, lastly, we have the case of Radetzky in Italy in 1849. Those instances, however, belong to a past that can never return. The new era of soldiering, that of national armies, led by a staff of such highly trained professional soldiers as the world has never seen, first legitimately called the status of the Austrian soldier into question.

The time we live in, with its wondrous scientific and mechanical inventions, its tendency for intricate

* Archduke Frederick and Archduke Ludwig of Tuscany. The incident in question is even expressly cited at the Military College of Theresienstadt, as a warning instance of want of military discipline.

organisation on a colossal scale, has brought about a revolution in the science of war, in the handicraft of the soldier, as it has done in almost every other walk of life.

The altered conditions of tactics and strategy must mark an entirely new phase in the history of warfare, both as regards regulations and qualities. The calls on the executive (*Anforderungen an die Leitung*) have risen as much as those on the individual. It is concerning these that doubt exists, and that not only with regard to Austria.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARMY—(*continued*)

Die Kritik ist blos da, um die Wahrheit zu erkennen, nicht um ein Richteramt zu üben.*—CLAUSEWITZ, vol. viii. 94

I

It is slightly unfair that the Austrian army is invariably compared to that of Germany. This is a comparison which cannot be sustained, for many reasons. In the first place, military Austria-Hungary does not dispose of anything like the financial resources of Germany. For whereas Germany spends annually £37,775,000, Austria-Hungary is only able to spend £11,750,000† (1890-91) on her hosts, the number of which is not in the same proportion smaller than that of Germany.‡ That this must mean comparative in-

* "The one aim of criticism is to elicit truth, not to assume the functions of a judge."

† Six millions less than the cost of our English army, which is put at £17,700,000.

‡ The peace effective of the Austrian army (1891), is 316,058 men, and 21,361 officers; that of Germany 486,983 men, and 20,440 officers.

efficiency somewhere is certain, even if we do not literally accept the opinion of General Montecuculli (apparently endorsed by our Duke of Cambridge), that "money" is everything in army matters.

Far more just would it be to compare the Austrian army to that of Russia, for the condition of finance, as well as the characteristics of officers and men, offer her far more analogies than in the case of Germany. Sir Charles Dilke* has endeavoured to do this, and the comparison turns out very much to the disadvantage of Austria. But we are loth to acquiesce in this last opinion, especially as it is based only on figures, and does not take into account flesh and blood. Besides, Sir Charles Dilke seems apt to make the wish father to the thought. Even Russian military authorities, who cannot be accused of partiality, readily acknowledge the excellent qualities of the Austrian army in its reorganised form.† For our own part, we incline strongly to the belief, that what may be considered the inefficiencies of the Austrian army are also, on a far larger scale, those of the Russian army. Our readers need do no more than refer to a work on the Russian army recently published in Bulgaria. The burden of Count Pfeil's‡ experience may be said to be, that whereas the altered con-

* See *Fortnightly Review*, March and April 1887.

† See "Russische Kriegsmacht und Kriegspolitik." By General Rostislaw Fadejew.

‡ "Erlebnisse des Major Graf Pfeil im Feldzug," 1877-78. Mittler. Berlin, 1892.

ditions of the present have impaired the blind devotion of officers and men of the past, the Russians have been hitherto unable to assimilate those higher qualities of exactitude and stricter discipline which are now required, and will probably also be required in a greater measure in the future. Nepotism, peculation, and ignorance are rampant in the Russian army and in its administration.

II

The modern Austrian officer is forced to learn a great deal, but there are no means of gleaning whether he has digested, let alone assimilated, his book-training. He is examined till his tongue, figuratively speaking, hangs languidly out of his mouth; but we are not informed how the men are chosen who examine him—in other words, who examine *them*: the Freycinets of France, let alone the Roons and Albedyls of Prussia, have yet to find, or at least to show, their compeers in Austria.

Travelling lately with an officer of the Austrian General Staff, he confided to us that their armies had in the past been commanded by *cretins*: but that now all that had changed, "you will see." Our informant was far from being a psychologist, or he might have been less positive about the efficiency of pouring new wine into old casks; the new wine in this instance standing for the reforms introduced into the working of the Austrian army since 1866, and applied or tried on a human material in a large

measure unfitted for, and unequal to, the strain involved in the process.

The Austrian soldier of old was ever, like the Englishman and the Russian, a splendid type of the fighting animal. The exigencies of modern warfare have led his mentors to try and convert him of a sudden into a steady, moral, thinking, highly wrought and trained effective engine of war. The evidence at our disposal inclines us to believe that the attempt is as yet a long way off the goal aimed at.

III

The Austrians, however much they may have improved, have yet a long walk before them on the road to conscientious love of intelligent hard work—nowadays the only road to safety—be the struggle of life decided on the green fields, beneath a glowing summer sky, or in Goethe's *Niedriger Häuser dumpfen Gemächern*.

Walking with an Austrian friend through the streets of Vienna one day, we met a handsome spick-and-span infantry officer, far above the average in smart appearance and position.

“ Well, Toni, how are you ? ”

“ Why, I have got my death-warrant.”

“ How so ? ”

“ They have made me aide-de-camp of the regiment.”

“ But, Herr Jesus, why, that is to say ‘ the soul of the regiment.’ ”

"True enough, but the bother!" (*Die Hetz!*)

"There you have it," our friend said, turning to us. "Such are our pleasure-loving young officers. A Prussian lieutenant would jump for joy at such a chance."

Ah, the love of ease and pleasure, the disinclination for every sustained effort of hard work, is at the bottom of much that is rotten in Danubian Denmark. Even those who possess good intentions have to wage a continual fight with the world of sense-life which surrounds every Austrian. How can an Austrian officer work persistently among his men, like a poor Prussian lieutenant in the dreary sandy solitudes of Brandenburg or Pomerania? The strains of the *Csingi Lingi Csárdás* sound perpetually in his ear. In fact, every influence of the senses that can tear a man away from hard work is omnipresent in many of the Austrian and Hungarian garrisons. No wonder it is that one hears tales of whole regiments which have been quartered in Hungary for a time becoming physically unfit. Hungarian garrisons are a Capua to Austrian officers.

IV

Even in the theoretical studies of peace-time in Austria, there is a vast difference noticeable between the point sought and the results obtained.

The Berlin *Kriegsacademie*—the University of the Army—has three key-notes: the practical, hard

work, and the most punctilious sense of personal honour. In Austria, on the other hand, everything is *schematisirt*—all theory—the individual is crushed out of being. The Prussian course of military study lasts three years. During the first two years, nine months are given to theoretical study, and two to three months are spent in the ranks, but always with a different branch of the service to that for which the student is preparing. After the conclusion of the three years' course of study, the whole number of would-be Staff officers undertake journeys on horseback under the lynx eye of the directing minds of the foresaid *Kriegsacademie*. On these occasions the practical fitness of the book-training is tested, and, according to the combined result of theory and practice, an officer's future is made or marred.

In Austria, the whole apparatus is far less workable. The Austrian book-examinations are more difficult than the Prussian, but the happy union of theory and practice, which only the due cultivation of the individual can bring about, is not apparent.

The key-note to this is hard work and conscientious exactitude—not on the surface, but welling from the depths of moral discipline—inculcated from youth upwards through generations. The different nationalities of Austria and their backward civilisation make that almost impossible of attainment for yet awhile. Many of the component parts of the Austrian army are mentally and

morally not much different to-day from the Croats and other types of the period of the Thirty Years' War, as held up to us by Schiller in the drama of "Wallenstein." *

V

Now, in England, we have never heard of young subalterns being too eager for the drudgery of drill-work. But if the English officer has more time on his hands than would be consistent with German military custom, still he spends his time in a far healthier fashion than does his Austrian comrade. Athletics, and a deal of harmless family life, which is to be found in every English garrison, tend largely to keep him out of the reach of serious mischief. There is, however, very little of either of the above in Austria. There officers spend a great deal of their spare time in *cafés*, or places even more objectionable. They do not congregate, as in Germany, in certain select restaurants, in the enjoyment of each other's society. The cavalryman avoids the infantry officer, and they both are to be found aimlessly promenading, standing at street-corners

* During the battle of Custoza (1866), a soldier of a Carinthian regiment remained behind vigorously searching for something in his knapsack. An officer asked him what he was looking for, and ordered him to the front. "I bitt i suach mei Buachl." He meant his prayer-book. A superior officer who overheard this, gave orders that he should be allowed to look for his Buachl, and added, "If he believes that his prayer-book will protect him on his perilous road, let us encourage him in this."

and ogling the fair sex, more than is consistent with a good use of their time.

Their whole temperament rebels against that strictness of discipline which is the very backbone of the Prussian service.* This, too, has the result, that the distance combined with the respect which exists between the common soldier and the non-commissioned officer, and between him again and his superior, is not to be kept up in Austria. Their method of saluting each other is languid, as languid and unmeaning as that dreadful Latin word *Servus*, which is the current one of greeting throughout the Austrian army.

The officer, instead of superintending drill in the broiling sun, as the Prussian officer does from 6 A.M., passes a deal of his time in the *café*, whence the sergeant fetches him on the way back in time for him to march home with his troops. No wonder that *dolce far niente* has long been in the blood.

Take, for instance, what occurred at the battle of Aschaffenburg, 1866, when the Prussians had stormed the hill and were already fighting in the streets. The poor Austrian soldiers were being taken into the houses to die, whilst the colonel of one regiment was still quietly lunching at an hotel. We have, too, seen men of that "lunching" stamp since 1866 in Austria! If the Austrians are in

* The high percentage of suicide in the army (131 among 100,000 annually during five years) proves the strain involved on the nervous system.

earnest in their endeavours to eradicate the vices of the past, they must make up their minds to the necessity of having such men as the lunching colonel shot, *dans les vingt-quatre heures*. Defects of character are not to be banished by mere routine regulations: iron discipline alone can succeed in gradually diminishing the area of their vicious action.*

VI

Added to this easy-going inaptitude, the Austrian officer often indulges in notions which he shares with the typical English and the French military man: for example, he fondly thinks that the particular branch of the service to which he belongs is incomparable, and acts on this assumption. There is nothing which is such a rotten worm in an apple as this foolish belief. It used to be thought good policy in olden times to make troops believe in their superiority, but time has pricked that bladder, as it has so many others. In fact, in nothing does the real modern spirit of warfare so much evince its superiority to that of other days, as in the discarding of all this brag and foolish overrating of self. It only leads to the direst disasters. Be it but borne in mind, that the Prussians never received so terrible a lesson as that of Jena. They were so convinced of their superiority to the French, that

* During the campaign of the Loire in 1870, General Aurelles de Paladine used to shoot a few stragglers occasionally.

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To sum up: the consensus of opinion seems to be, that the Austrian cavalry, and particularly their artillery, are well up to average excellence. It is the infantry, the detailed composition of which is said to compare unfavourably with that of Germany. Further, the General Staff is also an item which is shrouded in mystery. As in the time of Frederick the Great, the Austrians possess to-day their twenty-seven General Field-Marschals, their seventy-three Field-Marshal Lieutenants: more or less! The doubt concerns the possession of the one "Eagle-eye"; for the lack of which all those dignitaries could not make up.

But even amid doubt upon this head, there is matter for positive congratulation and rejoicing. By a merciful dispensation, Austria has hitherto been spared the ordeal of having to take serious note of the "popular" General: a type that came very near to bringing irreparable disaster to France, not so long ago. Thus, a record of misfortune is at least free from what might be one of shame and disgrace. The backwardness of public opinion, and the passionate loyalty of the nation to the

Habsburgs, prevent the originating of such. General von Benedek was a *popular* General in the same sense that General Grant was a *popular* leader ; but only to a partial extent could they be termed thus. Both men were silent, non-self-advertising, good, honest, simple individuals. They both—the one victorious, the other crushed, heart-broken—were one in this : that they were men of character, not toadies, even to a Habsburg or to a democracy.

It is a healthy sign, a negative blessing for which Austria may well be devoutly thankful, that she does not seem likely to produce the above-mentioned type, even in the future. This is no small matter for congratulation, for nowadays, unlike of old, no people is entirely safe against the advent of such and its disastrous effects. And Austria, in her exposed position, cannot, like England and America, afford to let the windbag burst, and trust to chance to supply her with a Marlborough or a Grant at the right moment. Let us only imagine what the stern Cromwellian Puritans would have said and thought of the *miles gloriosus*—the popular General !

In piping times of peace, the sickly growth of public opinion in Austria has indeed, on one or two occasions, brought forth little ugly fungi of a toad-stool character ; fortunately, however, only to be cut down in good time. The Emperor of Austria may not be able to discern a Moltke, if such a Titan were pondering unknown in silence among the chosen of his Staff, but being himself a simple,

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THE PRIEST

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The very title of the Emperor, "His Apostolic Majesty," indicates the grip possessed by the Roman

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It was only the other day (1889) that Bishop Strossmayer, who had gone out of his way to coquet with the Russeophile Slavonic party, received an open rebuke from the Emperor Francis Joseph, in public, at the manœuvres at Belovar. The prelate merely bowed his head in silence; but we have never heard that he expressed regret for his attitude, or that the Holy See thought fit to do so for him. In fact, at this very moment, Bishop

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The Austrian people cannot help being impressed by a power which they thus see at times exercised in direct opposition to their own beloved Sovereign, even while members of his own family are Roman Catholic priests.* That the Roman Catholic Church has in Austria-Hungary tremendous power, is undoubted. Its wealth and possessions there are enormous. In Hungary alone, one million five hundred thousand acres (two per cent. of the land of the entire country) belong to the Church. Many of the innumerable Catholic chapters, monasteries and churches, too, possess, besides large incomes, priceless pictures, precious stones, gold and silver art-work,† which vie with many royal collections elsewhere.

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Things were not, however, always unbrokenly, undisputedly thus. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century the reformatory doctrine of John Huss spread far and wide in Bohemia. And in the course of the sixteenth century Protestantism had gained so firm a hold in Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and even in the Austrian home provinces, that at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War

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Here, then, was one of those significant, ever-lastingly recurring moments in history, when the appearance or non-appearance of "one man"—the right man—is destined to decide the fate of empires; in this instance, also the faith of many millions of human beings.

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disfavour as of old. It is even whispered that the late Archduke John left the service, and sailed away under the *nom de voyage* of Johann Orth, simply because he was sickened at the result of his efforts at military reform.

VII

To sum up: the consensus of opinion seems to be, that the Austrian cavalry, and particularly their artillery, are well up to average excellence. It is the infantry, the detailed composition of which is said to compare unfavourably with that of Germany. Further, the General Staff is also an item which is shrouded in mystery. As in the time of Frederick the Great, the Austrians possess to-day their twenty-seven General Field-Marschals, their seventy-three Field-Marshal Lieutenants: more or less! The doubt concerns the possession of the one "Eagle-eye"; for the lack of which all those dignitaries could not make up.

But even amid doubt upon this head, there is matter for positive congratulation and rejoicing. By a merciful dispensation, Austria has hitherto been spared the ordeal of having to take serious note of the "popular" General: a type that came very near to bringing irreparable disaster to France, not so long ago. Thus, a record of misfortune is at least free from what might be one of shame and disgrace. The backwardness of public opinion, and the passionate loyalty of the nation to the

Habsburgs, prevent the originating of such. General von Benedek was a *popular* General in the same sense that General Grant was a *popular* leader ; but only to a partial extent could they be termed thus. Both men were silent, non-self-advertising, good, honest, simple individuals. They both—the one victorious, the other crushed, heart-broken—were one in this : that they were men of character, not toadies, even to a Habsburg or to a democracy.

It is a healthy sign, a negative blessing for which Austria may well be devoutly thankful, that she does not seem likely to produce the above-mentioned type, even in the future. This is no small matter for congratulation, for nowadays, unlike of old, no people is entirely safe against the advent of such and its disastrous effects. And Austria, in her exposed position, cannot, like England and America, afford to let the windbag burst, and trust to chance to supply her with a Marlborough or a Grant at the right moment. Let us only imagine what the stern Cromwellian Puritans would have said and thought of the *miles gloriosus*—the popular General !

In piping times of peace, the sickly growth of public opinion in Austria has indeed, on one or two occasions, brought forth little ugly fungi of a toad-stool character ; fortunately, however, only to be cut down in good time. The Emperor of Austria may not be able to discern a Moltke, if such a Titan were pondering unknown in silence among the chosen of his Staff, but being himself a simple,

high-minded gentleman, he can at all times discover and put aside the greater danger than even the *cretin*: the self-advertising windbag. Thus, when samples of the genus have here and there deftly yet naturally worked their ominous heads to the surface, the Emperor has invariably done his duty to himself and to his country, by promptly eliminating them. Austria's well-wishers will unite in the hope that the Emperor may always prove himself equally successful in discerning true military talent in the hour of need.

In the meantime, the enormous advantage which is said to belong to the defensive in the war of the future, will make it a dangerous undertaking, even for the 200,000 Russian cavalry reported to be concentrated in Poland, to molest Austria-Hungary.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRIEST

Jesus saget, mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt. So müssen die Prediger auch denken dann predigen sie nach Ihrem Thodt im Duhm von Neuen Jerusalem.*—FREDERICK THE GREAT

I

It was all very well for the mediæval punster to put it: "*Tria faciunt monachum: bene loqui de superiore, brevarium legere taliter qualiter et sinere res vadere, sicut vadunt.*"† The Roman Catholic Church has, however, outlived punsters, mediæval and otherwise. Nowhere, too, is this fact more patent than in Austria-Hungary, the greatest Roman Catholic Power in the world.

The very title of the Emperor, "His Apostolic Majesty," indicates the grip possessed by the Roman

* "Jesus saith: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Clergymen must think likewise; then, after their death, they will preach in the Cathedral of the New Jerusalem."

† "Three things make the monk; to speak well of his superiors, to read his breviary mechanically, and to let things go on as they may."

Catholic Church in Austria. And if this be insufficient, the fact is further symbolised by the annual ceremony of washing the feet of the poor—in humble imitation of Christ washing his disciples' feet—which at Easter-tide both the Emperor and the Empress publicly perform under the eyes of the clergy, in the Hall of Ceremonies at the Hofburg. Perhaps, too, the strongest ocular evidence of Catholic supremacy is supplied by the annual celebration of Corpus Christi, when the Emperor joins bareheaded in the procession of the clergy, carrying a lighted candle in his hands.

In truth, the Roman Catholic priest still represents a power, with which even the authority of the Habsburgs is unable to interfere.

On the occasion of the death of the Crown Prince Rudolph, the clergy in the Tyrol refused to say Masses for his soul, although such were said in Rome by order of the Pope. At Botzen, on the day of his funeral, the churches were filled with people, but no priest appeared, and no service was held!

It was only the other day (1889) that Bishop Strossmayer, who had gone out of his way to coquet with the Russophile Slavonic party, received an open rebuke from the Emperor Francis Joseph, in public, at the manœuvres at Belovar. The prelate merely bowed his head in silence; but we have never heard that he expressed regret for his attitude, or that the Holy See thought fit to do so for him. In fact, at this very moment, Bishop

Strossmayer is a thorn in the side of the monarch of Austria-Hungary.

II

The Austrian people cannot help being impressed by a power which they thus see at times exercised in direct opposition to their own beloved Sovereign, even while members of his own family are Roman Catholic priests.* That the Roman Catholic Church has in Austria-Hungary tremendous power, is undoubted. Its wealth and possessions there are enormous. In Hungary alone, one million five hundred thousand acres (two per cent. of the land of the entire country) belong to the Church. Many of the innumerable Catholic chapters, monasteries and churches, too, possess, besides large incomes, priceless pictures, precious stones, gold and silver art-work,† which vie with many royal collections elsewhere.

Five cardinals are usually appointed by the Holy See to Austria-Hungary, besides twelve archbishops

* It is rumoured that the next archbishop of Olmütz will be the Archduke Eugene, the youngest brother of the Queen Regent of Spain. The See of Olmütz has already once been occupied by an Archduke—namely, the Cardinal Archduke Rudolph, son of the Emperor Leopold the Second, and of Marie Louisa, Princess of Spain. He died in 1831, and is still remembered in the musical world as the disciple, friend, and protector of Beethoven.

† The Cathedral of Cracow, in particular, possesses a unique collection of treasures in statuary, pictures, gold and silver monuments, cups, liburii inlaid with precious stones; these in themselves are almost worth the journey to behold.

and forty-one bishops. Some of the great Austrian prelates, moreover, have incomes* which dwarf those of our Anglican archbishops, in the same proportion as the hold of the former on the Austrian people surpasses that of the latter on ourselves. Further, thirty-nine Catholic Seminaries undertake the education of the Catholic priests, of which there are 15,732 in Austria proper, and 6782 in the kingdom of Hungary. Added to the above, there are 6565 monks and 10,281 nuns in Austria, and 3169 monks and 2208 nuns in Hungary. Surely there are enough clerical troops and ammunition here to ensure the obedience of the whole country to the sway of Rome.

III.

Things were not, however, always unbrokenly, undisputedly thus. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century the reformatory doctrine of John Huss spread far and wide in Bohemia. And in the course of the sixteenth century Protestantism had gained so firm a hold in Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and even in the Austrian home provinces, that at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War

* The Archbishop of Gran, Primate of Hungary, is supposed to have an income of 1,000,000 florins; that of the Archbishop of Olmütz, in Moravia, is given at 400,000 florins. The late Cardinal Archbishop of Olmütz, Prince Fürstenberg, left a fortune of between two and three million pounds sterling. He used to contribute £4000 a year to the Pope's Peter's pence.

have to pay that sum [the price of admission to said Exhibition] for the privilege of looking at such through glass cases."

IV

In spite of these and many other negative advantages appertaining to days gone by, the paternal system of Metternich was doomed. Opinion was unanimous that it must disappear; but many forgot that it was imperative that there should be something to take its place.

Because, after a night of ignorance, humanity had suddenly gained the privilege of expressing an opinion, it was in some quarters assumed—notwithstanding the simplicity of mankind, as evidenced, for instance, by the successful advertisement of patent medicines, etc.—that with the permission of expression had come *something to express!*

Unfortunately, Metternich's autocratic *régime* had deadened the energy of the people. It had kept them in a perpetual state of hopeless minority. When it broke up, accordingly, it was a matter of supreme moment to discover something wherewith to replace it. For, although we all know it to be easy to destroy existing institutions, we have it, on the authority of Macaulay,* that the best of "laws have no magical, no supernatural virtue; . . . laws do not act like Aladdin's lamp, or Prince Ahmed's apple; . . . priestcraft, ignorance, the

* "Lord Burleigh and his Times," Macaulay.

rage of contending factions may make good institutions useless."

These truths are exactly what the good Austrians were inclined to overlook when they found themselves all of a sudden become free men and brothers! *

They were rid of one master, and the other was not yet in sight. "Public opinion," which was to supply every want, did not at once start into life. At first it was only a reverberating echo of foreign "opinion" which reached the dull tympanum of the sleepy citizen. An old Austrian General, Haynau, happened to be on a visit in London. During the Hungarian rebellion, he had ordered some Hungarian murderesses to be flogged, and, this becoming known, he was attacked and pelted with brickbats by the draymen of Barclay and Perkins' brewery. The good Austrians were disenchanted when this came to their ears. This, then, was our boasted public opinion! Their disenchantment increased when they were told that murderesses were hanged up in their petticoats publicly by their necks in England, until they were dead! But what was their disgust when they found out that those very draymen themselves had a little special weakness

* It was only for a short time at first that they were so. The revolutionary movement of 1848 resulted in the grant of a Constitution, which, however, was forcibly annulled by Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Prime Minister, in 1851. Parliamentary institutions were permanently introduced in Austria in 1861.

for wife-beating when in their cups on Saturday nights !

No wonder that the good Austrians suspiciously surmised that, after all, professional jealousy (*Brodneid*) was at the bottom of this enunciation of beery public opinion in London ! Lord Palmerston, as its figure-head, came in for a large share of unpopularity in Vienna, where the street-boys in those days used to sing :

“ And if the devil hath a son,
He surely must be Palmerston.” *

All this was not calculated to predispose the Austrians in favour of the new engine of political salvation. They bethought themselves accordingly of the saying, *Quæta non movere*, and indulged in another nod, to be broken by the fuller introduction of Parliamentary Government in 1861 ; and at length, in 1867, found themselves at sea on the broad billows of Liberalism.

V

Now, when freedom came in due course, with all its privileges as well as all its pitfalls, the Austrian citizens were in great perplexity. At first it was supposed that the millennium had suddenly arrived—no more narrow, retreating, privileged foreheads—*la carrière ouverte au talent* ! “ Public Opinion ” was born !

* “ Und hat der Teufel einen Sohn,
So ist er wahrlich Palmerston.”

It was presently discovered, however, that "Public Opinion," though born, was as yet only an infant. It became accordingly the task of responsible personages to utilise the period of its minority to get everything into working order, so that public opinion should reign effectively on attaining its majority.

The principal task fell to the daily press; and it is only fair to state that newspapers, such as the *Neue Freie Presse*, soon deservedly gained cosmopolitan recognition in their endeavour to do their share towards nurturing public opinion. The result of it was, however, only a one-sided one, for the provincial "rag" (*Wisch*) developed into an insidious hate-breeding bacillus. Printer's ink is largely responsible for the race hatreds of Austria.

But the press is not everything: it is at most the tuning-fork; and the Austrian citizens were in want of an orchestra and a public participating audience. Some travelled enthusiasts began to dole out political commonplaces which they had seen at work elsewhere, but the poor Austrian listener only felt:

"Mir wird von alle dem so dumm,
Als ging mir ein Muhlrad im Kopf herum."*

Others sought to nurture public opinion on beer, but the beer of the country did not lead to intoxication and bestiality: hence it was not good for the purpose.

* "All this makes me feel as stupid as if a mill-wheel were rotating in my head."—GOETHE'S *Faust*.

Again, there were others who believed in charity, and came among the people with the mock humility of the huckster, offering to contribute to their different local institutions—nursing a constituency, it is sometimes called—on the tacit understanding that they should be entrusted with the honour of representing their neighbour's share of public opinion. These men asked for no wages in return for their labours, for they reckoned that it would pay them socially if they managed to get their names connected with the official position of a representative of the people. But the Austrian citizens, though simple, were also suspicious, as only Austrians can be. They had not yet learned to worship the strong man in him who is lavish with his money. They had not even learnt the art of advertising their goods; how could they appreciate the intricacies of the art of advertising themselves and know how to prick the many-headed beast till he yells again? They would have none of these compacts; on the contrary, they muttered to themselves: "We may be fools, but we are not beggars; we will have none of this man's donations."

VI

Thus were the first attempts at the practical introduction of modern methods into Austria wrecked.

But public opinion in fair Austria is as yet but a bantling of yesterday. Indeed, what is a period of thirty years in the growth of such a giant?

Why, scarcely enough to attain the teething age, let alone the period of measles and whooping-cough. Thus it can hardly be expected as yet to show any of those signs of vigour that mark its adolescence in other countries.

This will be best understood when we bear in mind that, during the last twenty years, Austria was the only great Power which has not participated in the general colonial scramble. Her public opinion would seem to have been not even hardy enough to scream for colonies.

How, then, could those priceless moral and intellectual possessions, which only fall into the lap of nations in which public opinion is a mature thing, be looked for in the Austria of to-day? It would surely be irrational to expect Austrian public opinion as yet to choose the wisest from among the nation to rule them, to pick out the popular General who is to lead them to victory. Above all, it would be premature for the Austrians already to rely too categorically on the same infallible wisdom of "opinion" among themselves which they are enviously forced to see at work and admire elsewhere. But here, as in other places, there are compensations.

Owing to public opinion being still in its infancy, we do not find any general interest in social scandals and in sewer-garbage of every kind. It is only among the loafer class of Vienna that such, up to the present, exists. Interesting felons, forgers, card-cheats, loafers, adulteresses, etc., do not as yet attract much attention; nor do such draw audiences in

town-halls; nor do they find a ready sale for their books, in case they yield to the pressing solicitations of publishers to give the public the benefit of their experiences. Though even here there is room for hope; for, what with the spread of betting and kindred pastimes, a certain public taste for garbage may yet become in time an accomplished fact.

VII

In the meantime, it does not seem possible that the fuller development of publicity and its outcome, "opinion," will do much to remove the political deadlock in Austria, but rather the reverse. In fact, according to all appearances the growth of "opinion" will still further hurry on the gradual elimination of the German elements which has been already referred to, and narrow down sentiment again to that parochial character which it has come to possess elsewhere.

Few things point more surely to the decay of the Germans in Austria than the fact that, since public opinion has come into being, the intellectual and commercial life of Vienna has retrograded. The Liberal era, which was to bring so much virtue and happiness, merely resulted in the ennoblement of the financial Cræsus and in the accentuation of a thousand political differences, hitherto scarcely felt. It has removed the wealthy nobles from their high offices, such as that of *Landes-präsident* (civil governor of a province), and substituted in their

stead obscure functionaries from the Vienna press bureau.

Formerly, an autocratic Minister threw sand in the eyes of the public; now the latter throw their own sand broadcast. Instead of strong character, a manipulating Liberalism has taken the place of autocratic rule. It created the "manipulator" under the direction of the late Count Beust as master-mason. Thus, besides liberty, the huckster, the self-seeker, vanity, egotism, conceit, incompetence, lifted their heads simultaneously! We are assured that they have not hidden them even now. And yet this process of evolution has not hitherto tended to produce the "new" ruling type which is to replace the old; the type that rides the many-headed, as you would a horse with bit and curb, whip and spur—that tells it what to buy and what to sell, what to admire and what to condemn, what to worship and what to kill with its icy ostracism. There is as yet an interregnum here!

In their despondency, the Austrian citizens have turned again towards their Sovereign, and an increased feeling of attachment to its Emperor has, for the present, been one of the outcomes of public opinion in Austria.

CHAPTER XIV

THE AUSTRIAN MIDDLE CLASSES—(continued)

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works ; in idleness alone is there perpetual despair.—CARLYLE

I

THE *Volkslieder*, or national ditties, besides offering a glimpse of a people's ideals, often afford us significant evidence of their weaknesses. How graphically, for example, does the popular ballad of "Darby and Joan" transpose us into the genial atmosphere of our own poor-laws and our parish workhouses !

In Austria there are few songs more popular among all classes than the *Kaernthner-lieder* (the songs of Carinthia), of Thomas Koschat. Among them, too, there is none so sure to excite the sympathies of an Austrian audience as that beautiful little song, "*Verlassen bin i.*" It is the complaint of the typical young Austrian peasant, who, finding himself deserted by his sweetheart, feels as lonely

in the world as a stray stone on the high-road. He walks out to the little country church, kneels down inside it, and tearfully bewails his love-lorn plight (*weint sich aus*).

Now this seems to us to throw an interesting side-light on Austrian character. The deserted swain does not drink to drown dull care, but he cries himself into forgetfulness of the faithless one; he recovers in due course, marries, and begets children, who in their turn indulge likewise in this enervating habit of tearful relief.

II

As every mental or moral quality in its excess tends to produce its opposite, so also with this Austrian tearfulness. It degenerates into unhealthy sentimentality, and thence by gradual descent, past over-cunning (*Superklugheit*), distrust, suspiciousness, down into the broad seas of envy, jealousy, duplicity, and slander, in the dark waters of which the informer and the liar, and others of that stamp, vegetate in tadpole fashion.

What sentimentality can accomplish in Austria was shown some years ago, when a desperate murderer,* after undergoing his trial with all the fireworks of Transatlantic interviewing publicity, was actually embraced on the scaffold by the State Prosecutor.

* A certain Franchesconi, who murdered a postman.

The suicide of the late Archduke Rudolf was as if ready-made for Austrian *Superklugheit* to gloat over. When officially informed that the Archduke had committed suicide—a sequence as psychologically natural as could be well imagined—it was too much for your middle-class Austrian. “What fools they take us for! Why, of course, he was murdered by some jealous country swain.” But in this case the peasant intellect was sounder than that of the cunning townsman. “What!” said a Mayerling peasant: “murdered by one of us; why, *du lieber Gott*, we would have brought him our daughter ourselves.”

It must not, therefore, be assumed that sentimentality or guileless simplicity are the only explanatory causes of the want of success which characterises the Austrian middle classes, in their attempts to grasp some of the intricacies of modern political life.

III

In England the individual, in the energetic practice of the gospel of “Self-help,” feels the hand of the State so little, that he is apt to forget that beside “rights” there are such conceptions as duties and moral responsibilities. He worships the strong man in him who succeeds. In Austria, in spite of laws almost as liberal as our own, the middle classes are, as already stated, still deeply imbued with the *vis inertia* of Catholicism and the

spirit of bureaucratic thralldom of the past. Thus they are neither noted for energy nor for the breadth and hardness of character, which are so necessary to enable men to compete in other walks besides those of politics.

While in England life implies struggle, and inability to fight and compete means social and material engulfment, there is little evidence of struggle among the middle classes of Austria. The enormous army of officials on fixed though small incomes throughout the country, who are sure of an existence free from care, partly account for this. Thus if it be true that so-called morality is largely a matter of temperament and climate, it may perhaps also be said that energy of character in great measure is a matter of circumstance. In London or Manchester it is possible for a sensitive nature to feel as if he could cry out: "For God's sake, let me work; or, surrounded as I am by the sordid vulgarity of universal struggle, I shall go mad." In Austria there is the greatest difficulty in getting away from the enervating effects of never-ending indolence and enjoyment: a state of things largely encouraged by the Catholic religion, with its gorgeous pageants and numberless obligatory public holidays. This general disinclination to work is also shown by the fact that the road-makers, masons, etc., are to a large extent Italian workmen.

The consequences of this are visible in more ways than one in the development of character.

Intellectual effort of a high order is rare in Austria. At least it must be considered significant of the atmosphere of Austria being uncongenial to high mental effort, that so great a number of gifted Austrians have ended their days by suicide. Among these unfortunates have been Lenau the poet, Raimund the dramatist, Blumauer the humorist; and, more recently, General von Gablentz, and von Uchatius the inventor of the steel-bronze guns. In fact, the average rate of suicides in Vienna is one of the highest in Europe.

IV

In Austria liberal institutions have hitherto proved insufficient in themselves to emancipate a people who are wanting in grit. The fact is, that the people are for the most part insufficiently trained to benefit by them. Institutions and laws accordingly are often abused for the benefit of those who stand above the level of the generality in education and cunning, and know how to turn them to their own personal advantage.

Above all, there is a decided lack of a thorough, efficient system of education. The scientific aims of Austrian schools are indeed not widely different from those of Germany; but the method of instruction is totally different.

Like everything else, education, important though it is, is carried on in a very "lax" fashion. The spirit of emulation and order is never inculcated at school.

The tuition is mostly of a superficial kind. Many schoolmasters are neither exact nor conscientious, and indeed insufficiently educated themselves to properly coach their pupils. They are as a rule quite content to deliver their discourses in the *Realschule* (School of Modern Science) or in the *Gymnasium* (School for Classical Study), as the case may be, without troubling themselves much whether the subject has been thoroughly comprehended by the boys.

No wonder, then, that towards the end of the school year, when preparations are made for the final examinations, a large percentage of boys are shown to be very imperfectly informed. The consequence is that the parents are in the first place told that their sons are not advanced enough to pass into a higher class. The next result is, that parents often withdraw their children from school before they are properly grounded in the principles, that they may place them in some position, in which in turn they display the same want of proficiency. It cannot but be that a certain superficiality sticks to them throughout.

The action of the Roman Catholic clergy, which is paramount in the *Volkschulen* (answering to our Board schools) in the rural districts and small towns, has a deal to do with the backwardness of Austrian education. It would appear that religious pressure often goes hand in hand with the suppression of much that is of use and benefit. It is so at all events in the case of the youth of Austria.

Compulsory education, too, is not universally in-

troduced into Austria, or at least is not universally put into practice. In proof of this we may cite the census of 31st December 1890. According to it about 30,000 of the population of Trieste were unable either to read or write (*Analphabeten*). In other words, in this enlightened condition were about 19 per cent. out of a population of 155,000 contained in the largest mercantile seaport in the Austrian dominions.

V

The universal culture of athletics in England—a form of energy which has universally found its outlet in the colonisation of the globe—is almost entirely absent in Austria.

Without being a spendthrift, the Austrian does not possess energy enough to be careful with money; and the unfortunate paper currency has a loosening effect on him here.

It is said that the Government effects a yearly net profit of between thirty and forty million florins owing to the paper currency. But it may be safely asserted that the country loses more than the equivalent of that amount by the disastrous effects of the paper currency on the national character alone. For in truth the Austrians, although they are such poor wealth-producers that their volume of trade hardly exceeds that of thrifty little Belgium,* often spend a florin and get no more for it than we do

* In the year 1888, Belgium imported goods to the value of

for sixpence. The every-day familiarity with their trumpery bank-notes leads them to spend a ten-florin note with an *insouciance* that is surprising to strangers. And this is in a country where, although nobody dies of starvation, yet there are so few methods of making money, that in Vienna the bakers, butchers, and brewers appear to be the only prosperous traders.

VI

Although in Austria everybody is now at liberty to "compete," industry is still either in the hands of enterprising scions of the nobility, foreigners (Germans or Englishmen), or Jews. The municipality alone seems possessed of the initiative we are accustomed to see displayed spontaneously in every walk of life by individuals in England. The beautiful public buildings, notably those of Vienna, are the creation of the high-minded men to be found in the Austrian municipalities. When we think what a libel on our national character the public buildings of England may with justice be said to be, we cannot help feeling that, *per contra*, the Austrians individually are not on a par with the grandeur of theirs. Nor is it surprising that the humblest official, as the representative of energy, whether of a municipal, appertaining to the "hohe Polizei" or of even more exalted character, should still

1,011,000,000 marks, and exported 1,255,000,000 marks; Austria-Hungary 1,066,000,000 marks (imports), and 1,458,000,000 marks (exports).—Dr. C. VON SCHERZER.

retain a halo of past times, and inspire a certain reverence among Austrians generally. Thus, whereas in England the battering of a policeman is still one of the cheapest outlets of high animal spirits, entailing in the worst case a fine of forty shillings, in Austria the mere verbal affronting of a royal and imperial official is a heinous offence.

There is something really awe-inspiring to the Austrian in the mere idea of officialism. Thus, there is hardly such a thing as a plain "office" or bureau * in the whole of Austria. The very word has fallen into disuse, and the majestic term "*Kanzlei*"—*i.e.*, Chancellory—has taken its place; not merely for the throne of the minor Government official, but even for the dingy little desk-den of the smallest trader.

The era of political freedom has been too short-lived as yet to transform the sleepy official into an efficient, let alone a humble, servant of the public, as we are accustomed to see him in England. His qualities have gradually matured in the blood, like a good many of the qualities of other people, which political patent medicine-men, but not psychologists, fondly imagine that humanity can shake off with a few doses of their specifics.

A queer Squint-brain, as Oliver Wendell Holmes would say, is that of the Austrian bureaucrat. One of those brains it is which absolutely refuses to recognise the fact that the shortest distance from one given point to another is the straight line.

* The official Press Bureau is here the exception which proves the rule.

VII

It is strictly in accordance with the obliquity of the Austrian official mind that we find the following notice posted up in Austrian railway carriages:—

“Standing on the platform and steps of the passenger carriages is by law *not* allowed!”* Of a truly Austrian bureaucratic character is this: instead of its being simply forbidden by law, it is not specially allowed by law.

A similar spirit is displayed in the petty enactment that postage stamps—which, by the way, the Austrians seem to manufacture so as to get easily damaged—are not valid if at all spoilt. Even a bit missing from an Austrian paper florin means the proportion of the missing bit being deducted from the amount of the note!

Once we had occasion to ask at a post-office whether a letter was over weight. It was weighed, and found to be within the prescribed limit, but the attending official added: “You had better put an extra stamp on; our weighing-machine is not quite reliable.”

On another occasion it was a case of telegraphing to a country station in Bohemia. We were roundly told there was no such place; but the inquirer remembered that the telegraph station was specially

* “Das Verbleiben auf den Plattformen und Stiegen der Passagier Wagen ist gesetzlich nicht gestattet.”

noted in the letter of his correspondent. Only after perusing half a dozen books and addenda did the post official sulkily admit that there was such a station at the place in question.

VIII

The inferior quality of Austria's smaller bureaucratic fry is one of the most ominous facts looming from the past into Austria's administrative future. It harbours one of the dangers she may have to encounter when called upon to take her inevitable part in the sudden mobilisation and action which, sooner or later, is likely to fall to her lot.

The Prussians have mastered a wonderful problem in their official service: the combination of iron discipline and hard work with the development of the feeling of responsibility in the humblest unit. In Austria this is far from being the case. Obedience is mechanical, often imperfect, tinged with sulkiness and arrogance, besides being, above all, tardy and lethargical.

Nor does the Austrian bureaucrat lay aside his dignity even when he dons his "Kommod Jacke." His dignity does not prevent him from sitting lazily—they call it *legère*—with his coat off during office hours, drinking beer and contributing to the revenue of the country by smoking the cigars of the Imperial Monopoly all day long. Not that self-indulgence tends to conciliatory humour. The nerves of the poorly paid and indifferently fed

ever-smoking minor official are not strong. For one thing, the ventilation of his "chancellory" is vile. He is easily irritated, and can at times be very haughty and even offensive. All this tends to make him a creature to be handled as one would a new-laid egg.

No sooner does an accident occur of such a nature as to call for administrative action than a state of general official rottenness is revealed, analogous to the social rottenness which follows the ventilating of sordid *causes célèbres* in other countries.

IX

The lamentable catastrophe of the burning of the Ring Theatre (8th Dec. 1881) supplied one of the most crushing instances of Austrian official arrogance. It was not the accident in itself: that might happen, more or less, in half of our London theatres to-morrow, the L.C.C. notwithstanding. It was a typical Austrian police official, Landsteiner by name, who showed us that the case was a thoroughly soil-nurtured Austrian product. Six hundred people were being roasted alive, and yet "everybody is saved" (*alles ist gerettet*) that worthy replied to the Austrian Archduke, who had arrived on the scene of the conflagration. And those of the crowd who presumed to doubt his official utterances he straightway proceeded to arrest! This man is now dead, but men of that Landsteiner type do

not easily die out in the countries which produce them. Though it is the fashion to believe that modern institutions can work miracles here, the other day his kind was alive again, and actively at work at Poertschach, in Carinthia.

A church steeple had tumbled down during Divine service, and a man was buried beneath the ruins. Above him, helplessness and petty jealousy were wrangling. The Mayor was not to be found. The builder burst into a flood of tears. The fire brigade hesitated to move, poor wretches. "We are here to put out fire, not to dig up loads of bricks and mortar," they cried. After that the commander of the district (*Bezirks-hauptmann*) and the district surveyor arrived, gave instructions, and departed. The official-ridden public looked on helplessly, and seventy-two hours elapsed before the man was extricated—for a wonder—alive!*

Here is another of the Landsteiner type, culled from our own experience. He was a humble commissioner standing on the Stefan Platz, Vienna. "Can you give me the address of a doctor?"

"What sort of a doctor?" he asked.

"Well, a family doctor, one who treats illnesses—in a word, a doctor."

"There!" he pointed. And it was a dentist (*Zahnarzt*) he sent us to.

It appears to us that there must be a connecting

* "See report of judicial proceedings at Klagenfurt, October 9, 1891, which resulted in an acquittal all round."

link somewhere between this commissioner, the police inspector Landsteiner, and many other officially-trained minds in Austria. How can we forget the genius who, directing some guns in one of the forts of Königgrätz during the retreat on the day of Sadowa, mistook the fleeing Austrians and their allies, the Saxons, for the enemy, and coolly shot down a few hundreds of them from the walls of the fortress!

It is said that the Emperor Frederick the Third, wishing to convey the idea that Austria was destined to outlast all other nations, composed the following line, each word beginning with a vowel in their due succession: "*Austria erit in orbe ultima.*"

May it not be possible that those who have for generations trained Austria's officials have misunderstood the meaning of this, and mentally transposed it thus: "*Austria erit ultima in orbe?*"

So much for the bureaucracy of Austria as such. Its typical significance, however, does not end here. We have it on the authority of the great Prussian statesman, Freiherr vom Stein, that:

"Despotic Governments destroy the character of the people, for they shut them out from public affairs and entrust them to the keeping of an army of rancorous officials."

X

This being so, it is not surprising that most of the specially Austrian idiosyncrasies common to all

classes have their *fons et origo* in the spirit of soulless bureaucracy. The political informer, the slanderer in private life, are largely represented in Austria, and have their common origin there.

There is perhaps no people in the world which combine spontaneous impulsiveness with narrow distrust and suspicion of his fellow-creatures to the same extent as does the Austrian. In no country in Europe, we venture to believe, is there such a high percentage of registered letters. The Austrian registers his letters for two reasons: first and principally, because he distrusts his correspondent, and wants to have a tangible proof in hand that he *must* have received his missive; and, only secondly, because he does not think the system of letter delivery reliable.

Nowhere is this trait of jesuitical suspicion more marked than in the public treatment of criminal cases. A man accused is already half condemned, let alone his being subjected to the same undignified system of badgering which strikes us so repulsively in French legal procedure.

To our English ideas there is something derogatory to the holder of a high office when we read of the presiding judge apostrophising a prisoner in open court: * "Do not lie! It is no joke that you expose yourself to." And the prosecuting counsel, not to be behindhand, adds: "I must tell

* Der grosse Zoll Defraudations Process.—*Neue Freie Presse*, 20th September 1892.

you frankly that it turns one's stomach to listen to such lies!"*

More remarkable still, such a thing as a man falsely accused leaving the court "without a stain on his character" is barely possible in Austria; for the petty bureaucratic spirit is sure to mutter that, after all, where there is smoke there must also be fire. Happy indeed is he who, once he has been in the clutches of the law, does not find some kind friend to do the treacherous work of the informer. Slander is unfortunately a cheaper pastime in Austria than in England. The generosity of feeling which disdains to further blacken one who has sinned, is very rare in Austria.

XI

Independence of character—the result of a broad cultivation of the mind under free institutions—is sadly wanting. If there is one thing more than another for which a certain type of Austrian has an instinctive dislike it is the exertion of exact thinking. A current slang phrase, "*Lossens mi aus*," shows this. Thus, if you approach this particular type, threatening a possible logical operation, he calls out in trepidation: "*Lossens mi aus*." This, translated into English, means as much as

* At the conclusion of this very case the presiding judge referred, amid loud applause in court, to the sad corruption which prevailed in Austria, from the highest officials to the most humble messenger.—*Id.* September 30, 1892.

"For goodness' sake, leave me alone—spare me." If you persevere, and persist in your onslaught upon his thinking faculties, his trepidation changes into agony, and he calls out: "*I holt's ni aus*," which means, "I shall give up the ghost if you persist." We have never heard of anybody being cruel enough to persist after that cry of anguish.

This dislike for exertion of any kind, so typical of the Austrian, is observable everywhere. The expression in daily use, "*Schau's*" ("Let us see"), shows that he is habitually in a passive, contemplative frame of mind.

The following authentic anecdote fairly illustrates this peculiar Austrian objection to any mental exertion or worry:

An Austrian officer, on a visit to Berlin, compromised a *dame du monde* to such an extent that her family felt in honour bound to take some notice of the matter, although it is not averred that the lady herself considered him in the least to blame, or herself to be pitied. Her brother, rightly or wrongly, took the matter up, and sent his seconds to the Austrian. The latter, however, had in the meantime left Berlin for Carlsbad. They followed him there; but what could they do with a man whose only reply to their challenge was: "Don't bother me with this affair; I am heartily sick of it?"* An answer prompted, not by fear of fighting

* "*Lossens mich doch mit der Geschicht aus, Die haengt mir ja schon lang zum Hals heraus.*"

—that would not be Austrian—but the horror of all the accessories, bother and annoyance: that is a different matter.

XII

There is a deal of that same weak indolence among the Austrian middle classes which the Russian writers Gogol, Gontscharow and others, have described as so characteristic of Russian society in general. In Austria this is partly known under the term of "*Gemüthlichkeit*"—*i.e.*, good nature. It is this which has so often played sad havoc with Austria in the field and in the cabinet. What mischief a single instance of this so-called "*Gemüthlichkeit*" can be the cause of, the following authentic fact may help to prove:

It was during the Bohemian campaign of 1866. A Saxon staff-officer, von E., was arranging quarters for the Crown Prince of Saxony in the château of a Bohemian noble. Suddenly an aide-de-camp from Austrian headquarters rides up and inquires of Herr v. E. the whereabouts of the Crown Prince of Saxony, as he carries a most important despatch for him from the Austrian commander-in-chief, General von Benedek. Herr v. E. informs him where the Crown Prince is to be found, and at the same moment the owner of the castle, coming up, asks both officers to lunch. After lunch von E. urges the Austrian officer to hurry away, saying: "If you want to catch the Crown Prince you must be off."

The latter replies : "There is plenty of time. The Count has invited me to dinner." *

At last, at eight o'clock in the evening, he departs. In the meantime the battle of Gitschin had been fought with a loss of 6000 killed and wounded. The despatch in question was an express order to the Saxon commander to avoid that battle at all hazards.

Herr von E. reported the case to Austrian headquarters ; and the procrastinating officer, instead of being shot, as he richly deserved, was dismissed the service.

Two years afterwards Herr von E. met him again in a theatre at Vienna, and was apostrophised in the following manner : †

"Say, comrade, how could you do such a thing as to report me ? I only wanted to enjoy a good dinner in nice company. And for that I was dismissed the service."

XIII

People assume that such incidents would be impossible to-day. Let us hope so.‡ In the mean-

* "Hot noch Zeit. Herr Graf haben mich zum Diner eingeladen."

† "Aber, Kamrad, wie Konnten Sie mir so was anthun und mich melden ? Hob'nur gutes diner mitmachen wollen in netter Gesellschaft. Musst' nun dafür Abschied bekommen."

‡ And yet a murderer (Szemeredy) recently escaped arrest at Budapesth because an inferior police official kept the telegram ordering that, on his desk from nine in the evening till ten the next morning.

time there is nothing with regard to which the Austrian continues to be so dreadfully wasteful and inexact as "time." A friend asks you if you have the right time. He pulls out his watch and compares it with yours. His own points to a quarter to the hour, yours to a quarter past. He looks at both and ejaculates contentedly: "*Es stimmt!*" (That's right!)

It has been said that watches in Norway have no second hands. We have seen clocks in Austria without any hands at all; and what is more, we do not think that they were missed or wanted. A clock in one of the principal streets of a large town marked the year as well as the time of day. The former ingenious and original notion worked perfectly (it was the year A.D. 1880); but, alas! the hour and minute hands had not settled down to their work when we happened to be there.

CHAPTER XV

THE AUSTRIAN MIDDLE CLASSES*—(continued)

Simplicity, of all things, is the most difficult thing to be copied.—STEELE

I

A VISITOR once incautiously engaged in conversation with a patriotic Austrian citizen, and ventured to deplore the want of "push" and enterprise of the middle classes in his country.

"Yes," he replied, "that is true enough. At the same time, you English, taken as a whole, with all your enterprise, are scarcely to be envied. You are a great people, perhaps the greatest in the world; for you have produced great men, and have managed to compete successfully almost everywhere and in everything. You have thrown all open to the pushing unit; woe unto him who cannot compete! The effort to keep abreast in the struggle has vitiated the instincts of many, and robbed you of contentment and of the quiet consciousness of a

* Most of the characteristic features dwelt upon in this chapter apply equally to life in some parts of Germany.

certain class dignity which you will find more or less prevalent throughout Austria. Count Beust, who knew England pretty well, has told us that the freeborn Briton is a greater courtier than the Russian serf.* Wherefore I am inclined to think that the kind-hearted amiability of your Prince of Wales has, by his indiscriminate recognition of the English middle classes, done more harm in encouraging what Count Beust guardedly calls the 'courtier' than he has thereby benefited the community at large. The fact is, that in this case also you compete socially. Your Royal Family, even your 'popular' nobles, cannot stir out for fear of being recognised and mobbed, not by the people, but by the middle classes. The 'great' try to escape them, but they are pursued wherever they go, be it to a racecourse or a continental watering-place. Now all this is, to our mind, positively sickening. I am told you are becoming democratic, but your democracy is not an idea, you are too practical for that; it is scarcely more than the result of the 'fleshpot' grasping crimes of your aristocracy and your middle classes. You are losing that old distinction which formerly made an Englishman the most dignified and retiring of men, the aristocrat of the world, and in your eagerness to 'compete' you are adopting the ethics and manners of Yankeedom."

* "Mémoires du Comte de Beust." Paris, 1888. Vol. i. p. 254.

II

Whatever may be the value of this criticism on us, there cannot be any doubt that the best phases of Austrian middle-class life are mainly to be seen where they have not been called upon to "compete"—namely, in their daily social life. Here we still find what Lord A. Loftus, in his recently published *Memoirs*,* describes as so characteristic of Berlin, fifty years ago:

"There was a primitive contentment which pervaded all classes. The spirit of speculation and the craving for amassing wealth had not invaded its precincts. People were satisfied to live simply and enjoy life."

Here are still to be found a citizen class, to whom the idea of adding to incomes by speculation would appear little short of immoral; whom the fact of great names being appended as decoy ducks to financial prospectuses would fail to attract. For such things they do not care a jot. However poor they may be, the gnawing misery of keeping up appearances is unknown, and sudden beggary falls rarely to their lot.

Again, neither betting nor drunkenness are to be met with in Austria. On the contrary, there prevails all over the country the same invariable decency of behaviour which is so characteristic of the population of Vienna.

* "*Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus.*" London: Cassell & Co., 1892.

This decency of behaviour of the middle classes, so often referred to, is one of the chief reasons why strangers are so congenially impressed on visiting Austria. It is especially noticeable, too, as it stands in somewhat striking contrast with the increasing arrogance and coarseness (*Rohheit*) which has gained ground among the middle classes of Germany since that country successfully "competed" in war in 1870—a feature which has even infected the German Universities, and has been made the subject of constant animadversion on the part of fearless public men in Germany; * for it is one which is gradually robbing their country of the sympathies and admiration which her heroism had gained. All this is still happily absent among the middle classes of Austria.

III

Another striking peculiarity of the Austrian middle classes is the survival of a so-called patrician class in the towns. To recall the counterpart of the urban patrician with us, we have to fall back upon those distant times when merchant princes lived above their offices; when towns, such as Bristol, Exeter, Edinburgh, York, London, etc., had dignified municipal bodies, the members of which were chosen from amongst families long honourably

* Only the other day Dr. Bosse, the Prussian Minister of Public Worship, complained bitterly of the increasing *Rohheit* of the youth of the better classes.

known and resident within the precincts of their respective cities. In those days, a town councilman (*Rathsherr*) was everywhere a gentleman, a man of character and weight. And even at the present day in Austria such a one is occasionally still to be found. In olden times, however, it was the character and decision displayed by these men, not only in the council but also in the field, which upheld the rights of the towns; just as in London the adherence or desertion of the municipality was at one time able to wreck a monarchy. The dignity which town life acquired through these elements has, however, long since passed out of the memory of our time.

Our English towns no longer, as of yore, possess this class. No longer are there families which for generations past have attained eminence in commerce and in the liberal professions of science, law, and medicine, and supplied the bulk of the municipal and higher official posts. The best blood of the towns has migrated to the country, bought land, and mingled with the gentry of the counties, taking away with it the backbone of character that used to give to such towns weight and importance.

In Austria, on the other hand, the towns still supply a patrician freehold house-owning aristocracy of their own, quite distinct from the feudal land-owning class. This aristocracy has existed for generations, even from the Middle Ages, when, as in Germany, the stream of the world's trade passed from the Levant by way of Italy's sea-ports, over

the Alpine passes into the old German and Austrian towns. It is the descendants of the pioneers of that enterprise who form a chief part of the Austrian patrician stock of the present day, and a mere glance at the fine old majestic town-houses to be met with in all large Austrian * towns will show that as a class they must have represented a fair standard of character, culture, and worldly prosperity for generations.

A well-known Catholic writer, Johannes Janssen,† thus expresses himself on the subject of Germanic town culture in past times: "It was the domestic hearth around which the life of our forefathers was centred, and one cannot without emotion note how comfortably and pleasantly (*gemüthlich*) they managed to live within their four walls. Every utensil in daily use was designed for practicability and beauty alike. In their iron and wooden ornamental work, doors and windows, tables and chairs, wardrobes and boxes, locks and knockers, stoves and candlesticks, in everything the fine sense and artistic hand of the constructor is conspicuous; even the smallest kitchen utensil of a plain middle-class establishment, so far as such have come down to our time, exhibits a decidedly individual and original character. It is with justice, then, that Wimpfeling extols the fact that German art deserves universal

* This applies as well to Germany. See Gustav Freytag's "Bilder Deutsche Vergangenheit."

† Born 1829, died 1891. "Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit den Ausgang des Mittelalters." 1876. Vol. i. p. 193.

admiration, not only on account of its majestic creations in architecture, painting and sculpture, but also in everything which it has produced for common use. The same care and conscientiousness which are apparent in the execution of great works is also employed on the most trivial. This is explained chiefly by the close union between art and manufacture. Art was evolved from manufacture as its finest product, and, in consequence of its daily familiarity with its source, exercises a decisive influence upon the ordinary tasks and products of handicraft. Every common craftsman sought to produce something really artistic, and endeavoured to attain perfection. He neither aimed at nor desired anything outside of his particular business, and found in his labour profit, recognition and honour, contentment and enjoyment."

IV

The world's commerce, that brought material prosperity to Austrian towns in those days, has since drifted into other channels; its wealthy representatives are no longer to be found as of yore. To-day it is the higher officials, the members of the liberal professions, science and law, the better type of manufacturers and shopkeepers,* who have taken

* Notably in Vienna and Budapesth, where the shopkeeper, whose family has been known honourably in trade for generations, occupies a good social position, and here and there is even ennobled. There is no social stigma attaching to the shopkeeper. His position is regulated by his conduct.

their place as the leading social elements of town life.

These present-day patricians form an aristocracy among themselves amid the middle classes, and in their social life, it may be said, they combine the best of what is to be seen in Austria. They do not take their standards of life from the aristocracy of the land, nor do they or their wives come up periodically to the capital, eager to present their daughters at Court, and mingle in the fashionable throng. Their women have no ambition to imitate the ways and manners of the nobility. Extravagance of living has, consequently, never spread to the middle classes. Fathers do not send their sons to the highest class scholastic institutions that they may ingratiate themselves with the scions of great houses, and thus learn the trade of the lackey on the threshold of life. Whence we can in great measure explain the significant fact that, however loose morality may have been in the capital, its example has always been without much influence among the middle classes.

There is no need to call out to these people: "For goodness' sake do not rush after the latest pinchbeck lion, do not grovel and toady before the great of the earth." They never dream of doing such things. They feel far happier among the lovely hills of their beautiful country, or at home among their own set.

Those, too, who have mingled with them there are not likely to forget the culture and family

happiness which they have been fortunate enough to witness. Music and the fine arts form a large share of the higher interests of the Austrian patrician and his family. From his class comes also the inspiration which finds its realisation in the splendid architecture of the country. For it is in the arts, music among them, that Austrians in general are specially gifted: those specialities of mind culture in which, as already pointed out, the feelings and the sense for the beautiful form a vital element.

V

The Austrian instinctively follows the bent of his temperament, even when he is intent upon cultivating his intellect. In this he stands in contrast with the North German, who will boldly strive to grapple with the most intricate problems of thought which may have been treated in abstract literature, even though poorly endowed for the purpose: innate power of will, in the former's case as in that of the Englishman, takes the place of the gentler gifts of Nature. Solid literature is, in truth, the Achilles' heel of the Austrian citizen.

In this, however, he is not a mere slave, a popinjay, a simulacrum; on the contrary, his natural unspoilt instinct stands him here in good stead. He admires Grillparzer, because, being an Austrian, he is proud of him. He loves the tales of Viennese humble life by Friedrich Schlägl, as well as those of Austrian peasant life by Rosegger, Anzengruber and others,

because he sees they are drawn from Nature, and because he sympathises with the subjects. Suppose, however, Prince X. were to write a book—and to the honour of Austrian princes, be it said, one or two of them have written books—let us say a first book, a bold bid for popularity, as contrasted with those books men now and then write in bitterness of heart, without much hope of success,—if, we repeat, an Austrian prince should write a book of the former class, you would never get the patrician *confrère* to turn up the whites of his eyes and ejaculate :

“How has it come about that the nobleman who, in this volume, has shown himself to be so consummate a master of style, and who evidently possesses the highest literary qualities—knowledge, eloquence, wit, humour, delicacy, and discrimination—should have all these years been hiding his light under a bushel ?”

VI

But we are straying from our subject. To repeat, it is in the family of the citizen class that music is cultivated as an art. Among such it is no rare thing to find the son or daughter of the house equal to the best professional. Yet this very daughter is brought up to the duties of housekeeping. She can even be seen superintending the servants at dinner, and waiting on the guests of the house. Such a thing as the daughter of the house being

served at table before a guest is never to be observed. Not that this domestic lowliness tends to make the daughters of the middle classes forget their station and throw themselves at the head of the first-comer. A certain healthy pride prevents them seeking matrimony as a haven at any price. Thus the stranger, however amiable and ingratiating he may be, if not properly accredited and having only the surface of his personality known, will find it no easy matter to obtain a matrimonial footing in Austria. For few homes are so wretched that daughters marry in despair to get out of them.

Among the middle class of Austria, too, it is that the women are to be met with who turn the head of the most confirmed bachelor; that make nobles, yea, even royal princes, forget all about birth, high station and palaces, and sacrifice worldly prospects in order to share a happy home with one of them.* Not that it is made a social ambition in these parts to marry their daughters above their sphere! The social life of the Austrian townsman is singularly free from the wish to wriggle eel-like to the top of the jar—to get on, to be ennobled, and mix with a stratum which elsewhere might be thought to be better than he, but regarding whom he has neither admiration nor envy. We have even met Austrians of good citizen families who were entitled to the

* During the current year a Prince of Meiningen and a Duke of Hesse have both married daughters of Austrian mothers of the middle class.

prefix of nobility,* and yet did not assume it. An even more significant instance occurs to us of a prince of a once reigning family seeking the hand of an actor's daughter. Not only did the extraordinary actor take time to consider the flattering offer, but he even hesitated for a long time to give his consent. He was anxious about the future happiness of his child. In an age when octogenarian bishops or millionaires marry girls of eighteen amid the blessings of an enlightened Church, there is still to be found amid a backward civilisation a poor Austrian actor who hesitates to allow his daughter to espouse a "Prince" for fear she might not be happy!

VII

Strange to say, although as a class the patrician town families naturally possess more refinement than their humbler fellow-citizens, this does not lead them to cut themselves off socially from the other inhabitants. In the winter festivities, such as balls—so characteristic of Austria—masquerades, etc., everybody who can afford a ticket takes a part on a footing of equality. The petty tradesman boldly leads the wife of the most influential citizen in the dance. This is of course only possible because vulgarity is non-existent in any class of the community. May not these very social conditions, which have

* The Austrian order of the Iron Crown entitles the recipient to the prefix of nobility.

existed now for so many generations, even be the cause of this being so?

Bearing all this in mind, it is not surprising that the social influence of the best families in the towns tends to keep the local administration in clean hands. The petty spirit of bureaucracy constantly finds righteous opposition and discomfiture. The bloated Imperial councillor (*Kaiserliche Rath*),* usually some rich-grown contractor or manufacturer, may puff himself before the community by his donations; but he will rarely succeed in ingratiating himself sufficiently with the citizens of larger towns for them to elect him to such a position as that of mayor. They do not seek his charity. It is an entirely different class of man that they want.

The burgomasters or mayors of some of the principal Austrian towns are chosen from among the best representative men of the urban patrician class. In these men, and in the character of their office too, as in so many things Austrian, there is a touch of sentiment of bygone times. Unlike the corresponding Transatlantic product of our day, who is spoken of as a sort of municipal "boss," and who runs the local show, there is something about an Austrian burgomaster of an important town that still savours of well-bred yet natural dignity; something of days when municipal dignitaries served towns with stout heart and strong arm, sometimes standing in the breach of the city walls,

* A title usually conferred in Austria for considerations such as entitle one to knighthood with us.

sword in hand, instead of shining by the capacity of their stomach, the glibness of their tongue, or the fulness of their pockets. And yet we are told that the good old type is dying out ; that is, however, all the more reason why we should study him so far as he is still to be found in the flesh.

VIII

The present burgomaster of Vienna is a striking instance in point. Originally an *avocat* or lawyer in a small respectable way of business, he is neither director nor even shareholder in a single commercial undertaking, let alone in a bubble company with limited liability. There is a feeling in those parts that such responsibilities might interfere with the dignity of his position, though this again would seem to be a bit of Austrian antediluvian ethics, seeing that even full Generals elsewhere are not above accepting salaries as directors and promoters of speculative enterprises.

Dr. Prix is a short, spare man of quiet retiring manners, and anything but imposing appearance. The expression of his face, however, makes up for that : it is intellectual, with firmness clearly allied to benevolence. He receives his guests on public occasions attired in a black dress-coat, unadorned by heavy gold chains of office ; standing—alone, without attendants—a little in front of the town councillors, also, like him, in plain black. Never did we see a man so unlike what we should call a

"popular man" likely to get on in the world—one who understands the fine art of elevating himself with adroitness. There is no cunning apparent in the man. Not even a fifth-rate after-dinner orator is he, we were assured; nor even a great ratepayer. This Dr. Prix could never have been pushed forward from amid a narrow coterie of city fathers. Such as he could never work on the Masonic lines of *do ut des*; or, in other words, observe that fair-play which is a jewel among thieves, is self-understood among "gentlemen"; meaning, in such cases, that each "gentleman" shall have his turn at the pump-handle: in twenty years twenty "worthies" getting their turn. We were told that the Mayor of Vienna* is quite a poor man. As for his salary, too, it is only about sixteen hundred a year (20,000 fl.) with £350 (400 fl.) added to defray the expense of a carriage. No wonder that he does not make an awe-inspiring impression. We feel sure that his clothes and all the paraphernalia he wore at a certain official reception of foreign visitors at the Vienna Town Hall (*Rathhaus*) could not have been worth £15.

IX

A man like this could never head clerical and other charitable subscription lists, or pay for gorgeous feasts, and, after a year's banquets, wind

* The town of Vienna has two vice-mayors, whose salary is 6000 fl. each (£500).

up his twelvemonth of office by presenting an elegant piece of plate, weighing so many ounces, to the municipality.

On meeting an individual of this stamp in his distinguished position, after coming fresh from home, a stranger cannot but put this question to himself: how has it come about that a man like that has been elected to so important a post? For the mayors of large continental towns are men of far greater weight and influence than those who fill these offices in England. In Rome, even a Duke Caetani does not think it beneath him to be burgo-master of the Eternal City.

How, then, could this Dr. Prix possess the qualifications necessary for such a post? And this matter is for us of a certain interest in view of the fact that the recent civic head of an important community nearer home, suddenly left the country, although, it is said, urgently "wanted" by the authorities, and remains so at the present moment! In our perplexity, we asked the traditional oldest inhabitant to solve the riddle. What he told us, much to our surprise, was as follows:

The Mayor of Vienna is not elected by means of the charitable fine arts of popularity, for the simple reason that he is supposed to be wanted for the sake of his intelligence and his integrity; in other words, his "character."

X

A Mayor of Vienna, then, is elected for the dignity and distinction of his intellect, his unblemished purity of character! Such are the qualities which the capital of the Austrian Empire still seeks for and loves to honour in the man who is to represent her dignity, her interests, her patriotism, and to dispense her hospitality.

Now and again occasions arise when the city of Vienna desires to express its wishes and congratulations, or a thousand other things, as the case may be, to one of the Habsburgs or to a foreign Royal guest. There is, besides, almost daily something or other in connection with which the loyal Viennese wish to approach their beloved Emperor. The Mayor of Vienna is their spokesman, and as if by instinct they feel that it is only fit that a patrician, a well-bred gentleman, a man of character should speak in their name to the Emperor. The easy-going citizens are not given to much hard thinking; nevertheless, somehow an intuition explains to them that their own dignity might suffer in the eyes of their revered Sovereign if they were to choose any other than the best among them to be their representative. The idea would never enter their heads (because disgust would kill it on the threshold) that a vulgar, wealth-gorged charity-monger would be a fit person to interpret their wishes and their loyal devotion in the presence of their august Sovereign. The Emperor of Austria

hates servility as much as pomposity. The Viennese know this, and hence there is another reason why they do their best to select a man who combines dignity with simplicity.

Neither money nor charity, then, has anything to do with the appointment of the Mayor of Vienna. The holder of this office is not expected to head a single subscription-list. He is not elected for his generosity with his own and the money of others; we repeat, he is elected for the dignity and purity of his character, as such men used to be elected in olden times everywhere. No wonder that the mayors of continental cities, such as Berlin and Vienna, are an honour to the cities they represent; and no wonder that the citizens, having secured such men, are not ready to let them retire after a paltry twelvemonth of feasting, guzzling, and well-calculated charity-mongering. As a matter of fact, the Mayor of Vienna is elected for six years,* and is very often re-elected.† Indeed, there is no valid reason why once a mayor, the chief of the Vienna municipality should ever cease to be one.‡

* In Berlin, the Mayor is elected for twelve years, and is generally re-elected; thus there is no turn at the pump-handle for others, no individualism, cruel exclusion.

† The first Mayor of London was appointed in 1189, and continued in office for twenty-four years.

‡ The full body of the electors of Vienna elect the town "deputies" (*Stadtverordneten*); these in their turn elect from their midst the town councillors and the mayor. There are three distinct elective bodies, according to the assessment of taxes.

XI

All this was indeed a revelation to us—a very egg of Columbus. Why should one think of such a thing as character? And yet, when it was fully explained to us, we had no difficulty in recalling confirmatory evidence of its truth. We remembered, for instance, the late Mayor of Carlsbad, in Bohemia. There was a man whose clothes would hardly have fetched £7 10s. He, too, was a plain, unassuming, but dignified man, whose duty it was to receive or call on the monarchs who seek relief in that world-famed watering-place. It is not the custom to present illuminated addresses in Carlsbad—people with disordered livers care for these even less than other folk. So the late burgomaster used merely to pay his official respects, asking if he could be of service in his official capacity to the particular august visitor, and then go on his way simply, but straight and upright, as he had come. In our belief, he never headed a single subscription-list (for he was a man of small means, as far as we know); nor did he probably ever in his life hide his plain, honest head in a loving cup. He spent, however, all his energies in furthering the well-being and prosperity of the rather greedy, rapacious Carlsbadian townspeople. And that their welfare, and not his, was his main object is fully shown by the fact that, when the recent terrible floods wrecked half the town, care and anxiety for others brought him to an untimely grave. That subscriptions were raised to

embalm his memory in stone or brass, we have never heard ; but our opinion of the Carlsbaders is such as to lead us to believe that Herr Knoll is still living green in the hearts of his fellow townsfolk. His was a long and faithful service.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PEASANT

A time there was, ere England's grief began,
When every rood of land maintained its man

I

THE paramount preponderance of the agricultural population in Austria-Hungary will be best understood by reference to a few comparative statistics.*

Whereas Great Britain, with a population of 38 millions, shows, according to the census of 1891, only 1,636,000 as the total number of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits (including 577,840 who figure as occupiers or owners of land), Austria, with 21 million inhabitants, shows, according to the census of 1880:

- 2,365,153 persons as landlords and tenants ;
- 3,791,512 as foremen and labourers ;
- 5,697,076 as forming the families of agriculturists ;
- 335,237 as domestic servants of same.

* See "Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England," Dec. 31, 1890. Third Series, No. IV. London : John Murray.

For Hungary, with a population of 16 millions, the official figures give :

1,451,707 as landlords and tenants ;

4,520,671 as persons employed.

The grand total in Austria of persons employed in agriculture, including children and servants, is given at :

12,188,998 souls, or 55 per cent. of the entire population.

An exactly parallel juxtaposition of figures is not obtainable for Hungary,* but, considering that Hungary has far fewer manufactures and industries than Austria, it will be hardly an over-estimate to assume that the percentage of those engaged in agriculture is even higher than in Austria proper, and that thus something like two-thirds of the population of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy may be considered as dependent upon the cultivation of the soil.

II

Until the year 1848 the peasantry of both Hungary and Austria proper were little better than serfs, though, in the case of Austria, they were so, perhaps, in a more modified form. At the present day Hungary alone contains 2,348,107 separate holdings of less than 50 acres (30 *joch*)

* The returns of Austria and for Hungary appear at different intervals for different periods, and are not made out on a common plan. Thus it is difficult to arrive at exact comparative results.

each. Exact figures for Austria proper are not obtainable, but we find that (leaving out the mountainous provinces of Salzburg, Carinthia, Dalmatia, Tyrol, and Vorarlberg) the average occupation of land varies from 40 to 17½ acres throughout the entire country. These figures, taken in conjunction with the grand total of 2,365,153 persons already mentioned as landowners and tenants for Austria proper, indicate a marvellous subdivision of the land among the peasant class—a point to the importance of which Mr. Gladstone recently referred in the following words:

“It must surely be painful to Englishmen and Scotchmen of the wealthier classes, when they travel on the Continent of Europe, to see in most of the countries plain signs that the cultivators of the soil have much larger access to the use of it for their own direct advantage than they can be said to enjoy in this free and in so many ways favoured country. It is coming to be more and more seen that the extension of the small culture in all its branches, animal as well as vegetable, may become a powerful instrument for the increase of the wealth derived from the kindly earth, and also for the social elevation of the tiller of the soil.”*

III

The merest glance at the peasantry shows that the social elevation here referred to is a patent fact

* Letter of Mr. Gladstone to the *Weekly Star*, March 1892.

in Austria-Hungary. Here and there, in outlandish nooks and corners, the agricultural labourer, the cottier, may still kiss the hand of the lord of the manor or the hem of the châtelaine's garment; but there is no feeling of social subservience among the peasantry at large—rather a sentiment of strong social independence, which shows itself at times in a somewhat barbaric form.

A Russian prince was staying at Meran some little time ago. He had brought his own servants with him from Russia, and was one day engaged in the garden beating one of them, just as three Tyrolese peasants happened to be passing. These men, probably of a philosophical turn of mind, and thus not wholly agnostic with regard to the virtues of the "stick" when righteously applied, seized hold of the Russian prince, and gave him with his own stick as sound a thrashing as he ever had in his life.

IV

The Slovene peasant, as he works in the fields with his womankind, scarcely deigns to turn his head to honour the passing stranger with his curiosity. This complete ignoring of the stranger is significant, and can be seen most markedly in the holiday life of the peasant. To be present at a peasant dance, is to see a sight perfectly unknown to us at home. Not merely the gay costumes, and
× the beautiful women (particularly in Hungary),

but their thorough enjoyment in their social life, unconscious of the looker-on (if seen, not worth noticing), cannot fail to leave a strong impression on Englishmen, whose memories of rural "bean-feasts" and "harvest homes" are apt to be mixed up with visions of degraded social pariahs and of drunken helots.

In much of the above the Austrian Catholic population shows a striking resemblance to that of Protestant Norway.

V

Naturally there are shadows where there is light, and superstition and bigotry have their dark record still in rural Austria. These would, however, only call for special attention if their prevalence were such as to preclude the existence of other qualities, which we are bound to admire as being largely typical, and as belonging to times slowly receding into the past.

The sceptic may ask: how is it possible that the curious medley of bigotry, superstition, and "cussedness," the united influence of which develops want of self-reliance and deceit—characteristics which are also largely prevalent in Catholic rural Austria—how is it possible that, amid all these drawbacks, virtues should still flourish and conditions still exist, of such a nature as to be part of the backbone of the country? And yet this is not only possible, but a huge sober fact, and one based on the essentially human (*menschliche*)

characteristics that underlie all unspoilt life on God's soil. It is among the peasantry of Austria that we find the one important common chord of life strongest—that chord, namely, which vibrates more or less right through the length and breadth of the country: its *Volksleben*.

The very word *Volksleben*, as denoting the social life and customs of the people, must be rendered in a foreign tongue, for in England we have long lost its counterpart, and, consequently, have no exact expression left in the language to indicate what we mean. The rapid development of our great towns, the gradual absorption of the communal land, and many other causes, have dried up and evaporated nearly every trace of the popular social life of past ages once identified with the Shakespearean expression of "Merrie England." This is best realised by noting the undeniable fact, that we hardly produce either novelists, poets, or dramatists who treat of that species of social life which is understood under the term of *Volksleben*. It is significant that the social life of our masses does not, hardly can, inspire our writers, *pace* the shadows of Robert Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd.

In Austria-Hungary this is quite different. The authors who deal with polite society are scarce worth mentioning, either in quality or in number. There seems to be something that admonishes the literary genius of this old-fashioned country: "Don't devote yourself to the glorification of tinsel and

tattle. All this is bound to pass away—the people remain !”

Thus the best writers, dramatists, poets or novelists, take the people and its social life for their theme ; their heroes from the well-known types of character found among the people in many past generations. The aristocracy of all classes—the best, namely—from the peasant to those standing on the steps of the throne, do not care for the memoirs of the gossiping waif, nor do they wish to see portrayed the life and doings of the bandy-legged plutocratic cormorant—the *Trottel*—let alone those of his lazy neurotic or cynically steeled society womankind. They prefer to read of and see portrayed the life of the people * in their villages, the love and sorrows of the miller's daughter, far away in Hungary on the banks of the Sajo ; the wicked but picturesque Alpine poacher, and the gamekeeper who covers him with his rifle high up among those cliffs where only chamois, eagles, and stray wild goat break in on the eternal majesty of Nature. Such and many other kindred subjects inspire the prominent novelists of Austria-Hungary. And the significance of it all can hardly be exaggerated.

* On a recent occasion, when a number of distinguished men of science met in Congress at Vienna, the Emperor graciously placed tickets at their disposal for the Opera House, and the programme consisted of three little pieces illustrative of the life of the Austrian peasantry.

VI

In nothing probably is there a greater difference observable between a country at the height of civilisation and such as Austria, than this affection for the simple traditions of the soil—this idealising of the customs of the peasantry—which have, both the one and the other, disappeared with us, and which no amount of gold and glitter, charity or patronage, can ever replace.

And what makes us think it well worth while to dwell on this difference in the taste of the public in the two countries is, that we believe it to be mainly due to the existence of this social life of the people that Austria has been able to weather as she has done her tremendous political storms. For it does seem possible for a people to possess a strong pulsating social life, even though politically unripe and indolent, and *vice versa*.

Man is a gregarious animal; only the *strong* unit can stand alone. And in few things is the gregarious nature of man shown more than in the songs of a people.

Now, Austrian song is in truth a world in itself. It includes not only the plaintive song of the Pole of Galicia, expressing his longing for a lost country; but the melancholy chant of the Slavonic peasant, denoting suffering in the past and hope in a great future for his race; and, by way of contrast, the wild Czardas, the fierce *Rakoczy Marsch* of the Hungarian. Then again there are the old war and

pastoral part-songs of the Germans, the Italian fisher-songs of the population of the South: all these go to form a coruscation of national melody and song unique in its depth and variety. They seem to exercise a softening influence, too, on the manners of the population, which are agreeably devoid of that bustling roughness to be met with in some other parts of the Continent.

All this cannot possibly escape the notice of the stranger on his very first step over the frontier. But, besides, there is the beauty and the indefinable natural charms and grace of the women of the humblest classes. In fact, the sense for form and colour is gratified in every direction. The picturesque garb of the peasant, whether it be the bronzed Slovak, with his broad grey felt hat and flowing white garment, cutting the ripe corn in the valleys of the Carpathians; the Hungarian vine-grower,* in festal array, bringing home his purple harvest to Debreczin; the Hungarian horseman, flourishing his whip as he gallops across the pusta after his cattle; the high-booted Pole of Galicia, or the Czech of Bohemia, carting his field-produce to the market town; the Styrian peasant, rowing his fodder-laden boat across some lake; or the Italian fisherman, unloading his catch in the harbour of Trieste: colour and natural grace are common to them all. And in most of them there is something untamed, something of the strange race of the

* Vines are grown in 5845 communes, and there are 912,633 proprietors of vineyards in Hungary. Prof. E. von Rodiczky.

gipsies, so numerous in Hungary, wild and savage, and yet simple as Nature herself, and which centuries of civilisation have been unable to eradicate.

VII

Most of us are only what circumstances make of us, and those of a social nature must have their share in this.

Now, the life of the peasantry explains not only the charm which his picturesque social customs exercise over all classes of the community, but the love and pride which the Austrian peasant takes in his status. Thus, although there are peasants of great wealth who own thousands of acres of land, these are not infected with the desire of cutting themselves adrift from their class, and donning a black coat, seeking to get out of their sphere and slip into that of the nerve-jaded townsman. Hence it is not surprising that the peasantry remain a forcing-ground for *character* in the country, and of genius, too, at times; for a very large percentage of the most talented men in Austria, in every walk of life, are directly descended from members of the peasant class. And here it may be noted, that the Catholic priesthood, in return for the devotion of the peasant, is often generously instrumental in assisting the talented peasant boy to make his mark in life.*

* As already pointed out, some of the highest dignitaries of the Church are peasants' sons.

VIII

But loyalty and devotion to the reigning House of Habsburg are, perhaps, the strongest features, particularly of the peasant of German race. It was the peasant class which always supplied the rank and file, the food for powder, in Austria's hundred-and-one campaigns. They were the men who again and again devotedly faced the rising genius of Buonaparte in Italy. They were the men who, under Austria's only General, the Archduke Charles, grappled with the Corsican invader at the bridge of Aspern, and there, for the first time, taught him that fortune was, after all, only a fickle jade, not to be chained irrevocably to his victorious chariot.

It is largely the Austrian peasant class which has made loyalty to the Habsburgs a word by which to swear. No other class could accomplish this, for no other class could pour out its heart's blood to the extent the Austrian peasant class has done, generation after generation. It is the attachment of the peasant to the House of Habsburg which has enabled it to stand defeats such as might well have wiped out half a dozen monarchies from the map of Europe.

No wonder, then, that the Habsburgs have a tender spot for the peasant. The Emperor and the Imperial Archdukes spend a deal of their spare time in the Styrian hills: not, like some, shut up in huge palaces fenced in by walls and iron gates,

surrounded by luxury and Court society; but out shooting, wandering o'er the hills, themselves dressed in the garb of the peasant. The Emperor enters even into the festive life of the peasantry. Thus, some years ago, he attended the Tyrolese rifle meeting at Innsbruck, joined in the spirit of the thing, and not only distinguished the pretty peasant girl who was deputed to hand the Emperor flowers and his mug of wine, but caused her to journey specially to Vienna to be received in private audience by the Empress, who presented her with a diamond cross as a souvenir.

IX

It is thus not surprising to learn that the Tyrolese peasant has a bolder bearing in the presence of Royalty than all the titled Court lackeys in Europe dare to assume. He even addresses the Emperor in the second person singular, the familiar pronoun of "du" (thou, thee).

The literature of German Austria is aglow with a poetical warmth of this personal devotion of the peasant for the House of Habsburg, to match which we must go back to the Scotch Highlands in the time of the Stuarts, or, later even, to the time when the Stuarts had forfeited the throne, and the Scotch peasant would still plaintively sing and tell of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," the outlawed Pretender. This was a kind of loyalty that smelt of the heather, and reeked of neither "charity nor donations." It

is perhaps the only instance of romantic loyalty of a people comparable with that of the Austrian peasant towards his Sovereign, for it, too, had been hallowed by misfortune.

The writings of P. K. Rosegger, already referred to, which are the common property of all German-speaking clans, offer many illustrations of the depth of this traditional feeling of loyalty and devotion in Austria.

Rosegger himself was originally a poor Styrian peasant-boy, and in his charming sketch, entitled "*Als ich den Kaiser Josef suchte*,"* he gives us an inimitable picture of the Habsburg traditions as they still exist among the peasants of the wild Austrian hills.

X

It is a little barefooted peasant-boy who tells us his adventures, one who had been taught to read, probably Rosegger himself.

He narrates how he had read of the far-off town of Vienna, of the Imperial family, and of the Emperor Joseph, who had gone among the people to learn for himself their sorrows and their wishes; who had visited the peasants to see for himself how the plough was handled.†

* "How I went in Search of the Emperor Joseph." P. K. Rosegger's *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vienna, Pesth, Leipzig. A. Hartleben. Vol. i. p. 146, etc.

† At Brünn, in the Bishop's Palace, the original (now worm-eaten) wooden plough is shown with which the Emperor Joseph II. ploughed a field with his own hands a hundred years ago.

“And thus you learned to love the good Emperor Joseph so much, that you pressed the book to your lips because the Emperor Joseph was not present himself. There were pictures in the book, and the sun shone on them; but your eyes were far away. There, behind the blue hills, there lies the town of Vienna. If the Emperor came to the peasant, why should the forest peasant-boy (*Waldbauernbub*) not go to see the Emperor? In one or two days he might be there—might be in Vienna, might go into the Imperial palace, up the tower of St. Stefan, down to the banks of the river Danube, where are many ships, and he could see all. He might talk to the Viennese, ask them what they were doing; he would tell them that he was the forest peasant-boy from Alpel, who was able to read their books, and thus he might make friends with them.

“And thereupon—poor little fellow—a restlessness came o’er you, so that you could no longer read in the book, and no longer sit still on the heap of stones at home.”

Then the lad runs to his mother, and tells her of his longing to go to Vienna to see the Emperor. In due course he does go, in his broad-brimmed hat, in his rough peasant coat, and the bright red tie, with a stout stick in his tiny hand. And there he stands at last before the Kaiser house (the Imperial Hofburg) in Vienna, all alone.

“I walked through three great porches. There was a large open space in the Kaiser house, and

there stood such a number of soldiers with fixed bayonets. On the very spot, too, that I thought I should have to pass, stood two giant-like men with white straps across their chests, and enormous black busbies on their heads. Two fierce, full-bearded fellows they were, with angry faces, with sword and gun ready for action : I could not summon courage to pass between them. But when I saw that others came and went unchallenged, I risked it, and the two guards stood as rigid as if made of wood.

"Then I walked up some broad stone stairs, along snow-white corridors, so that the sound of my steps re-echoed from the walls. There were mighty folding-doors in brown and gold, one after another. Ah, that I might only discover which is the Emperor's room !

" 'What are you doing there, boy ?' asked a gentleman with spectacles, and a forehead which seemed to reach right over his head, coming towards me.

" 'Oh, sir, I am so glad that you have come ; I would so much like to see the Emperor, if you please.'

" 'Indeed ! But, my good little fellow, that is rather a difficult matter to manage.'

" 'Oh,' I said, 'it is very easy ; everybody is allowed to speak to the Emperor Joseph, even the peasant, for I have read all about it.'

" 'The Emperor Joseph ?' the gentleman asked. Then I told him how I had come from Styria to see the Emperor Joseph.

"He looked at me for some time with a serious face; then he smiled, and again he looked serious. I became quite at my ease, and told him many good things about the kind Emperor Joseph that I had by heart.

"The gentleman sat down on a bench, took me by the hand, and said:

"My boy, what a queer chap you are! Since, however, you have come to Vienna expressly to see the Emperor Joseph, you must be taken to see him. Just wait a bit, it is now nine o'clock. Come to the front of the Capuchin Church (*Kapuziner Kirche*) at ten o'clock punctually; do you understand? I will meet you there, then we can go together.'

"'I shall be pleased indeed,' I answered; 'but I shall be a little afraid when the time comes.'

"'The Emperor Joseph will do you no harm,' he replied. . . .

"At ten o'clock punctually I made my appearance at the appointed spot, and had not waited long before the strange gentleman from the Kaiser house came up, accompanied by a monk. The latter opened the door of a cellar, into which, after having lighted a candle, he led us down a dark staircase. Could the Emperor Joseph be in the cloister cellar to-day? That *would* surprise me.

"I kept close to my new acquaintance. Then we walked slowly between huge stone and bronze blocks (*Blöcken*) and boxes. Before such an one—it looked like a great coffin—we stopped. The

gentleman gently took off his hat, and putting his hand upon the brass, said : ' Here, my boy, in this coffin lies our Emperor Joseph. . . . Dead these sixty years ! '

" Thus had I sought him, the great Emperor, whom we can never forget, whom the people still love so much. Thus, with the simplicity of a child, and with a persistence (*Beharrlichkeit*) born of holy veneration, I had come to the very spot, had gone down to his grave.

" Not a word could I utter : I felt a shivering sensation. I hardly looked again at the sacred sarcophagus, which was dimly illuminated by the monk's candle ; nor did I direct a single glance even towards the other coffins. I reeled up the stone steps, and in a corner of the church I burst into a fit of bitter crying.

" The gentleman from the Hofburg laid his hand upon my shoulder, but did not say a single word."

CHAPTER XVII

WOMANKIND IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Bella gerant alii ! Tu, felix Austria, nube !

I

It is said to have been a Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus, living in the fifteenth century, who gave Austria the above quoted advice : to " let others make war," but, as for herself, to " believe in matrimony."

And the rulers of Austria have taken the hint and acted in this spirit throughout their family history ; for the constant extension of their dominions has been almost invariably due to prudent marriages.* No wonder, then, that the saying, *Tu felix Austria, nube*, has in course of

* Albert V., by marrying the daughter of the Emperor Sigismund, first brought the throne of Hungary (1438) to the Habsburg dynasty. Maximilian I., by marrying the daughter of Charles the Bold (1477), acquired the Netherlands. His son Philip, by marriage with the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, acquired the right of succession to the throne of Spain, which indeed fell to his son, Charles V. The Emperor Ferdinand (1524), by his marriage to

time come to possess a national significance in the Realm of the Habsburgs. And quite apart from their application in the utilitarian sphere of politics, these words contain a significant reference to the prominent part which lovely woman has ever played in the affairs of Austria.

The Hungarian women in particular have always been the theme of the rapturous enthusiasm of the poet and the nation at large. It is not the sentimental devotion to an ideality of innocence, such as we find among the poets and the folk-lore of Germany. No, it is burning earthly passion that gleams through the words of the hot-blooded Hungarian devotee. And, in truth, there is something inherent in the Hungarian woman which casts a halo o'er the worship of the senses, and robs even frailty of half its ugliness.

"Weder blond noch braun zu schauen
Sind die echten Ungarfrauen,"

says the "Volkslied."

The thoughtful (*tiefsinnige*) velvety eye, which flashes disdain, and quickly turns to playful roguery, is said to reflect the three moods typical of the

the sister of the king of Hungary, acquired again the right of succession to the kingdoms of Hungary, Bohemia, as also to Moravia, Silesia, and Lausatia. As a crowning instance of what the Habsburgs owe to the fair sex, it may be mentioned that the country of Tyrol came to them by voluntary cession on the part of the Dowager Countess Margaretha Maultasche (Pursed Mouth), 1395.

beautiful Hungarian woman. These moods a poet has compared to the tranquil moon, the flashing lightning, and then again to the refreshing rosy dew of the morn. The women of Hungary are also famed for the heroism and devotion which they have displayed in many a romantic incident of their country's history.

II

It is hardly too much to say, that the Austrians as well as the Hungarians of to-day owe their social amenities, the charm of their manner—yes, and we are afraid their pleasure-loving, work-shirking characteristics, too—largely to the seductive influence of their womankind. For the Austrians, Roman Catholics though they be, have yet practically appropriated and practise the great Dr. Martin Luther's precept of worldly philosophy :

“ Wer nicht liebt Weib, Wein und Gesang,
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.”*

In Austria who worships not woman must undoubtedly be a fool !

Thus the woman in Austria is the centre and pivot of social life among all classes. She does not, however, seek to extend her influence to politics. It is only among the Hungarian nobility that *les*

* “ Who loves not woman, wine and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long.”

femmes politiques are to be found ; and these figure in this capacity merely as partisans of their male-kind, and because they are imbued with a strong sense of high-spirited patriotism. As for that interest in politics which has for its end the emancipation of woman herself, for it the Austrian woman has no hankering. She has no desire to obtain the franchise. The Austrians themselves say that the reason women in other countries desire political power, is that they no longer possess the feminine charms which make their own women so seductive. Moreover, it is a strange coincidence, that the hard-featured, angular type of female we are accustomed to associate with popular agitation for the removal of certain Acts, and the proposed introduction of many other *uncertain* ones, is absolutely absent in Austria!

Still it would be a great mistake to argue from this absence of the self-asserting female, that woman is a down-trodden creature in the Realm of the Habsburgs. Those who think so had better lose no time in convincing themselves of the contrary, and perhaps in the process they may learn to feel, *in propria persona*, the bewitching power the Austrian woman wields over man by the mere force of her feminine magnetism.

It is by the aid of the charms with which Nature has so richly endowed her, that woman rules in Austria. Was not the greatest ruler the Austrians ever had, Maria Theresa, a true example of this Austrian type ?

III

The beauty of Austria's women, whether they be of Hungarian, Slave, Polish, or mixed German race, has become proverbial. All books of travel relating to Austria are full of the admiration which her women call forth, not only by reason of their grace and beauty of feature, but also of their fine physical proportions. And this is the more striking when we bear in mind that, whilst making every allowance for exceptions, the men of Austria generally do not come up to the physical standard of the women. If in Germany we occasionally wonder how women so insignificant and plain (*hansbacken*) become the mothers of fine handsome men, in Austria we are surprised that such lovely women should be the mothers of weedy-looking men. May we not have here a riddle of Nature before us, inasmuch as a community, noted for its sensuous enjoyment of life, produces lovely women, whereas in Nature's laboratory a sterner atmosphere of moral rigidity is required for the production of a high-class virile type of man?

No female type in Austria may come up to the unique dark-haired, blue-eyed Irish woman, nor do we meet the finely chiselled English aristocratic face. There is, however, no country in the world which produces so high an average of female attractiveness. And the special feature of this is, that physical beauty and feminine charms are equally present in all classes, from the highest to

the lowest. If there be a distinction, it is that a plain woman is oftener seen among the aristocracy than elsewhere. In truth, there is something indefinitely aristocratic in Austrian womanhood of all classes. Even the physical attributes of blue blood, faultless complexion, finely moulded limbs, dainty hands and feet, are to be met with in the Hungarian and Slavonic peasant equally with, sometimes more markedly than in, the oldest families of the nobility. In all classes, and of all races more or less, their bearing, their manners, possess a touch of unspoilt simplicity and dignity which is essentially their own. They are endowed with a distinction which is lacking in countries where you can tell at a glance in what sphere of life a woman is born. Somehow, here grace and beauty know no difference between high and low, and, in Austria, Nature often bestows upon a poor, barefooted, short-skirted peasant-girl (with her face framed in a kerchief tied under the chin) the same enchanting form, the same graceful walk, the same magically attractive glance, as upon her more high-born sister. Not that they are prodigal of their glances to strangers. As we have elsewhere remarked, the Slavonic peasant-girl, working in the fields in Hungary, will hardly deign to turn her head to look at the passing traveller. The stranger, too, who sees the peasant-girls on a Sunday evening dancing the Csardas in some country garden, need not expect many glances from them.

Along the Danube there are sturdy, barefooted peasant women who help to make the steamers fast at the landing-stage. This is a strange sight for such of us as have only seen poor drudging womankind in highly civilised countries. These women do the work which in other countries is left to men; but they are not degraded in consequence. There is even something about their appearance which commands respect, and receives it. Nature has conferred a certain dignity on the humblest of which civilisation has not yet robbed them, even as competition has not yet ruined them physically.

IV

It does not surprise us to find that, all aristocratic class prejudice notwithstanding, there is perhaps no country in which more romantic love marriages are made between the highest and the humblest than in Austria. The many instances of this among the Habsburg family are well known. Was there not once, and that not so very long ago, an Archduke who married the daughter of a toll-gate collector? He saw her pretty face peeping out as he passed by, and he came back and wedded her. Among the Austrian aristocracy, the number of such matches is legion; while in Republican, but socially most conservative, France such a thing as the marriage of an actress into the nobility is almost unknown. The famous dancer, Taglioni, became Princess Windischgraetz; Char-

lotte Wolter, the *tragédienne*, has long been a Countess Sullivan; Princess Lori Schwarzenberg was originally a singer, Sophie Loewe by name; Marie Marberg, the actress, is now a Countess Westphal; Countess Schoenfeld is the daughter of an actress. A Prince Liechtenstein is married to a fascinating widow of humble birth. The late Princess Batthyany was the daughter of a Hebrew banker. The beautiful women of the people are ever receiving the legitimate homage of Austria's nobility, and no race of women are more fitted to evoke it.

V

The love of pleasure and the distaste for continuous hard work, which is typical of the nation, naturally also affects its women. When they do excel in serious effort, it is usually in some walk connected with the fine arts, such as dancing, music, or the drama, for which they are singularly gifted. Some of the most renowned female musical executants, as well as actresses, in Europe are Austrians.

The influence of the Catholic Church is as evident in the female world as it is everywhere else in Austria. The spirit of Catholicism tinges the character of Austrian womanhood in more ways than one. Catholicism is answerable for the bigotry, small-mindedness, the lack of intellectual culture among them; although the exceptions to

this rule embrace some of the best read and some of the most highly cultivated women in Europe. But the independence of thought, the serious views of the higher vocation of women, which are reflected in the literature of Western Europe, find few disciples among the women of Catholic Austria. It is only among the Protestant aristocracy of Hungary that such are to be met. As a general rule, Catholicism is indirectly at the root of the extraordinary influence which Austrian womanhood wields over the men, causing the latter to behave in many respects like big children.

On the other hand, Catholicism must be credited with a share in the large amount of true charity to which Austrian ladies devote themselves. The so-called *Vereinsleben** of female Austria is one of its main features. In most Austrian towns charitable institutions exist, in which Austrian ladies take an active part, and which call forth the highest encomiums.

The Church must also be credited in some degree with that absence of heartless worldliness, which it is so pleasant to note among Austrian women as a whole. For although the Catholic priest may "squeeze" the rich man, and only say Masses for those who can afford to pay for the luxury, he does not himself toady the rich man socially, or fall down in adoration before the golden calf. Thus while he acts strongly by example on the female

* Meaning the activity connected with charitable institutions.

mind, he does not inculcate the blind worship of Mammon or worldly position by bowing to them himself. On the contrary, many traits of the Catholic Church tend to emphasise an equality of rich and poor before him—notably the mixing up of high and low, rich and poor, in Catholic churches. Thus it is indirectly due to the priest that the female snob is very rare in Austria. And this is, perhaps, the reason why among the cosmopolitan female rubbish which is continually begging its way into the Courts of Europe—one of the ugliest sights of our time—there is next to no Austrian element.

Even when frail, the Austrian woman is rarely venal. The absence of the slavish adoration of wealth and position by her women is one of the causes of the quiet, contented social life that is so widely existent in Austria. It also prevents the spread of that hideous clammy ostracism and contempt for poverty which is the direct outcome of opposite conditions, and which does so much to sterilise the female heart in many places.

VI

There is a large amount of domestic happiness to be found in every sphere of life in Austria: perhaps more than is to be met with elsewhere. And there is no doubt in our mind that this is almost entirely due to the excellent qualities of the Austrian women. It is not that married people are "better" there than in other places: perhaps rather the

reverse ; for, according to some of our standards, they are sometimes even downright "wicked." It is whispered that they do not practise a Puritanic immaculateness with regard to the seventh Commandment ; that they are more pleasure-loving, more light-hearted than is strictly consonant with a due regard for their higher spiritual interests. But they make up for these defects, as far as it is possible for poor weak-kneed humanity to make up for such, by generally leading a simple life, devoid of outward glamour and artificiality.

So, too, the Austrian wife is far more of a companion to her husband than is usually the case in Germany. Her vivacity and brightness of disposition bring sunshine in their train. She, as well as her husband, are more free from that petty nagging propensity which seems too often to be the *damnosa hereditas* of the harder-grained German stock. Again, there is usually less distance between the mental culture of man and wife than in Germany. The tastes of both are lighter, more pleasurable, and these they share more often in common. The Austrian himself does not possess in an equal degree that rather rigid sense of domestic attachment and discipline so notably omnipresent in Germany, or the good-natured unselfishness of the domestic Englishman. Austrian husbands often take the responsibilities of married life too lightly, particularly in not sufficiently watching the education of their children. Whatever domestic discipline exists in Austria is mostly due to the mother.

However, it is not of that sterner kind which makes a typical French mother often the directing spiritual and intellectual force of a family. It is more of a twining ivy variety; it has its root rather in the heart than in the mind. Their kind-heartedness makes them too indulgent. An Austrian mother can rarely refuse her sons any request. Hence they are partly responsible for much of the weakness which adheres to Austrian manhood through life.

VII

But if her warmth of heart is the source of her indulgence, as it is of her passionate nature, it also shows itself in a rare capacity for "forgiving," as many Austrian husbands can vouch. The Empress-Queen, Maria Theresa, was a true Austrian woman in this respect. Coming from the death-bed of her husband, the Emperor Francis, to whom, notwithstanding his gallantry, she had ever been devotedly attached, she met Princess Auersperg, who was supposed to have been her rival in her husband's affections. Maria Theresa possessed greatness of soul enough to say to her: "My dear Princess, *we* have *both* lost much."

The Austrian wife has often been known to forgive where others might be more ready to upbraid, or to light the torch of domestic conflagration, even though they themselves be buried beneath the ruins. She remembers that, after all, certain things do not alone constitute her sole orbit of life: she has her

household and her children; the family honour is in *her* keeping, and they think a deal of that in some circles in Austria. She instinctively shrinks from dragging her wrongs into the public courts of the country. She thus practises the very gospel of self-abnegation we now and then hear preached, yet so seldom see practised. Disappointment does not lead her to drink or despair. She seeks consolation in her devotion to her daughters. However bigoted, however narrow-minded she may be, in this she is honestly conscious of her vocation. She has herself been brought up to feel that it is a privilege to possess children, which must be deserved. Thus she brings up her daughters in the same way as she has been brought up herself. Without having ever heard of the pregnant sentiments of Mrs. Fawcett,* she instructs her daughters to value affection above mere position, and to deserve both by the domestic training she affords them. And the general simplicity of Austrian domestic life, in which outward appearances are not everything, assists her in this.

* "Many of the shipwrecks of domestic happiness which most people can call to mind have been caused either by the wife having no real vocation for the duties and responsibilities of marriage, or from her having married without deep affection for her husband, simply because she felt it was a chance she ought not to miss of what is euphemistically called settling herself in life. Such a marriage is as much a sale as the grosser institutions of the East can provide. It is a desecration of holy things; a wrong to the man, and a wrong to the children who may be born of the marriage."

VIII

Some people assume that domestic qualities in women, however desirable, are merely a means to an end, and that the drudgery of home unfits a woman for the dignities of a drawing-room. A closer acquaintance with the womankind of Austria would soon show the fallacy of this view. For, next to the French women, there are perhaps none who combine domestic talents to such a degree, with the bearing and *savoir faire* of the modern "lady," as do the women of Austria. The Polish lady is the only exception to this rule. She sometimes inherits the proverbial slovenliness of her race (*Polnische Wirthschaft*).

Even among the highest ladies in the land, it is not thought *infra dig.* to do their own marketing, and to see to the details of the household. The proudest of countesses will think nothing of getting up at daybreak to see that her husband has his breakfast properly served before starting on a shooting expedition. She even takes a pride in doing this.

The average Austrian lady may not possess in the fullest degree the strong sense of order and discipline that distinguishes her German sister, but her shortcomings have their compensating advantages. Her artistic sense lends a charm to her home; and, above all, as a housekeeper she has few rivals.

Her superiority here is evident to the most cursory observer; for it applies to the women of all

classes. And a striking proof of this is seen as soon as the Austrian frontier is crossed. However humble the inn, the coffee is excellent, because the women *see* that it is excellent; they see to it themselves, and take a pride in doing this. There is a deal of domestic morality hidden in the Austrian coffee-pot; in the bright cooking utensil; the honest fulfilment of household duty. Who knows whether the coffee-pot may not be the explanation of there being so few crazy women in Austria? They have something to do, and thus steer clear of the origin of so much female vice and misery—idleness.

IX

It is notably among the peasantry and the working classes that the domestic and other good qualities of the women of Austria tell their tale. This has been indirectly found out by "General" Booth. For Austria is one of those Catholic countries which, he has admitted, are least in want of the syren charms of the Salvationist trombone. Moreover, drunkenness is non-existent among the womanhood of Austria-Hungary!

The significance of this fact only comes home to us when we bear in mind that, in the town of Glasgow alone, during the year 1891, eleven thousand women were arrested in public resorts and thoroughfares for being drunk and disorderly.* For, in a social sense, this is perhaps more ominous

* Drunkenness, unless accompanied by incapacity and disorder, calls for no comment in our statistics.

than if fifty convictions for murder had been registered within the same period in that town. It would take a deal of frailty to strike the balance unfavourably against the absence of this miserable human scourge!

X

The women are the mainstay of the peasant and working classes. They are the backbone of the social life, which holds them together and banishes the foul scenes of degradation which manufacture and poverty bring more or less everywhere in their train.

The immense importance of the social life of the lower classes in Austria, already referred to elsewhere, whether industrial or agricultural, can only be understood by those who have been able to witness it and draw comparisons.

For whilst the working classes, when dwelling in the towns, are becoming more and more like those of other industrial countries—the men seeking the dram-shops, the women sinking to the drudge—in the country the conditions of life are still primitive, and the social influence of the women is especially marked. The wife of the humblest knows how to place a decently cooked meal before her family. In factory districts, you may sometimes see the women bustling along the road, either going to their own work, or carrying the midday meal to their husbands. They, as a rule, are scrupulously clean in appearance, with their bright red- or blue-coloured handkerchiefs tied round their heads in picturesque

fashion. Their homes, generally speaking, are wonderfully clean and tidy. And, strange to say, these daughters of the lower classes—particularly if sprung from the peasantry, walking abroad bare-headed all their lives—never think of wearing the cast-off clothing of their betters. They would be ashamed to do so. In the words of an English traveller: * “It is curious with what pertinacity the peasant women in every part of Hungary retain the costume of their ancestors. A sentiment of shame is attached to a change, especially to any imitation of the higher classes. It may be very well for a lady to put on such foreign fashions if she likes, but an honest Hungarian peasant-girl should wear the same clothes as her grandmother wore before her.” On the other hand, it is rare to find women of this stamp, who do not possess a richer stock of under-linen than many a “lady” elsewhere brings with her into her married home. As in the coffee-pot, so is there a deal of female morality in the linen chest.

And of an evening, when work is done, or it may be a general holiday (and there are too many such), the womankind invariably share the recreations of the men. On Sunday, they sometimes finish their afternoon’s outing by entering the parlour of the village inn. The women have a cup of coffee, and pull out their knitting. The men indulge in a glass

* “Hungary and Transylvania.” John Paget. London; Murray.

of beer. Very often the village priest, the lodge-keeper or forester from the neighbouring estate, the doctor, the high and mighty post-office superintendent, are there too; perhaps also the very capitalist whose energy has created the whole place out of virgin forest. And if they are personally known to one another, the evening is often whiled away by all of them joining in a general conversation.

In the winter, the working classes in the country have their dances, and it would surprise many to witness some of them. Those who speak from experience, can testify to pleasant hours spent at such gatherings. In fact, we have seen more female beauty, more natural grace of bearing, on such occasions than elsewhere, when the diamonds sprinkled over the half-naked humanity would have sufficed for a king's ransom. But, stranger still, we have never witnessed at such festive gatherings one single instance of misbehaviour or intoxication. And it is the womanhood of Austria who have made this possible.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION

There is a Spring coming. Nay, as I hope, one day an Eternal Spring, when all that is dead and deserved not to die shall bloom forth again and live for ever !—THOMAS CARLYLE

I

Cross the Austrian-Hungarian frontier from the south-east—say from the direction of Constantinople—and the first impressions of a traveller hailing from the west of Europe will be of a distinctly congenial kind. Fresh from the depressing influence of the universal decay so noticeable in Turkey, you cannot fail to be gratified upon entering a country which approaches much more nearly to your own forms of civilisation. You may recall the splendid physical type you have left behind in Turkey, but even the sight of the easy-going populations of the Lower Danube cannot undo the impression that you have come from a country of total stagnation into one which at least makes some show of life.

Almost analogous is the feeling of the stranger

journeying from Russia to Galicia, otherwise Austrian Poland. It is not decay which is left behind this time, but merely a backward civilisation—a country in some respects still in the Middle Ages, but withal endowed with the buoyant strength of youth. Its rough methods, typical of a barbaric past, are here replaced by a kinder and more humane administration. The very aspect of the population is more civilised, more gentle, less repellent. Here the Pole may, without molestation, sing his plaintive national song, "*Noch ist Polen nicht verloren*"; whereas in Russian Poland it is prohibited. Here also the Polish Jew may roam at will in the full adornment of those *peyes* (long ringleted curls down each temple) which are ruthlessly forbidden in Holy Russia. Lastly, there is a congenial absence of the dirt which we have heard of as inseparable from everything Polish, and which caused General Sebastiani* to exclaim, on alighting amid mud ankle-deep at his hotel in Warsaw: "*Est-ce que c'est ceci que cette canaille appelle sa patrie!*"† Austrian municipal government, whatever its shortcomings, has cleansed the aspect even of Polish towns. They are singularly primitive and backward in sanitary arrangements; but otherwise the towns of Austria-Hungary wear a far brighter and cleaner look than do most of our own, both as regards the streets and the inhabitants.

* French General sent by Napoleon the First after the peace of Tilsit, 1807, to arrange the delimitation of the frontier.

† "Is it this, that these dogs call their fatherland?"

II

The general impression is thus a favourable one, even though one may be unable to overlook the physical falling off in the population as compared with the rough, sturdy, military types of Russian Poland.* There is here, too, a lack of that quiet decision, that silent discipline, so noticeable all over Russia. Perhaps it is, however, that our eyes are not yet quite prepared for the discrimination of bright colours on emerging from darkness.

The transition from west to east is perhaps least perceptible if you enter Austria from the south by way of Bavaria. There, on either side of the frontier, is to be found community of race, religion, and popular life.

At the same time, if one must be critical, and desirous of reaping instruction from sight-seeing, he must enter Austria from the north-west, from Prussia; either from Upper Silesia *via* Oderberg, into Moravia, or from Lower Silesia through one of the valleys of the Giant Mountains, or again from Saxony *via* Bodenbach, into Bohemia. In every such case the change is from sober, and mainly Protestant, Germany into warm-coloured, Roman Catholic Austria, which only thirty years ago was

* There are said to be about 200,000 horsemen in Russian Poland at present, many of them fierce Cossacks of the Don, the Ural, and the Ukraine; untamed sons of the endless steppes, little distinct from their savage ancestors.

the acknowledged political head of the German Confederation.

Catholicism, be it noted, shares with the Emperor the quality of omnipresence in Austria. If every inn or tavern contains a portrait of the latter, almost every private house has its nook where hang pictures of Patron Saints or of the Virgin Mary. In fact, you cannot walk abroad without being constantly reminded of, and brought into contact with, the Church of Rome. Along the high-roads you will notice, at fixed intervals, little chapels dedicated to the service of one of the numerous saints of the Roman Catholic Calendar. If it be night, too, you will see a tiny lamp burning dimly behind a coloured glass. It is, let us suppose, the evening of the particular day dedicated to some saint—St. Joseph's day, for instance, the 19th of March; in that case, those who are named after this very popular saint—men, women (Josephine), and children—will congregate on the high-road in front of the little lamp, and say their evening prayers in silent reverence.

III

Look carefully around, and it will not require much mental effort to understand how the changes of our time have come to pass. The eternal fitness of things is of itself sufficient to explain all. A sense of easy-going, passive unreadiness is everywhere apparent. The very frontier guard-house, if

travelling *via* Prussian Silesia by road, will show you that clock dials are lazy here, and still strike the hours of a time long since dead and buried in the west of Europe. The custom-house officers, with their hands in their pockets, philosophically contributing to the income of the State by smoking the State monopoly cigars or tobacco, are full of the dignity and phlegm only to be found where the wheel of time drags on at a snail's pace. Beggars, cripples, or harmless *Schanis*,* are in evidence by the roadside, and among the crowd a few small-pox-marked† creatures may also be noted: the whole betraying a lack of that discipline which is observable in Prussia, and which, combined with high intellectual and moral training, has made that country great on the field of battle, as well as in the quiet offices of her administration.

IV

There is little evidence of hand work anywhere, and apparently there is no necessity for it. Things move on merrily (*gemüthlich*) enough without it.

The moment, however, that an inn is entered, a change comes o'er the scene. Here you are in the

* Austrian term for the harmless idiots to be met with everywhere in the rural nooks and corners of the country.

† Vaccination is not properly controlled in Austria; hence the many small-pox-marked faces. In 1888, out of 923,835 children who ought to have been vaccinated, only 727,802 were registered, and of those only 650,318 were successfully treated.

domain of Austria's womankind, and therefore there is excellence. Every kind of refreshment is of good quality, and its preparation far superior to that obtainable on the Prussian side. Whether it be at a village inn, or at a small railway station, the beer, the bread, and especially the coffee, are invariably good. The moment you come in contact with Austrian culinary comforts, you will unwittingly have put your finger on one of her strong points, a big vital nerve in the social organism: the love and care of her people for everything connected with the physical appetites or sensuous enjoyments of life.

Everything points to the culture alike of sentiment and of the feelings in general. And this strikes you the more forcibly on arriving from Germany, since there, as with us in England, even in a lesser degree, comparatively little is outwardly offered to attract the senses.

Austria is essentially the country for pageants of every kind. The clergy, the military, and even the civil population vie with one another on festive occasions. A civic, historical costume festival at Carnival time, or at night a torch-light procession, are sights that can, in Germany, be matched only here and there. Without a doubt the combinations of characteristic colour * and typical form which are

* It is a curious confirmation of Austria being essentially the land of bright colours, that the Turkish fez is almost exclusively manufactured in Strakonitz (Bohemia). It is said that the peculiar, deep red colour of the fez cannot be produced elsewhere.

to be met with amid the many races of the Habsburg Empire are most noteworthy and wondrous.

V

Austria-Hungary gives the impression of forming the natural, gradual stage of transition between Western civilisation and that of the East, which extends with little variation from the gates of Constantinople as far as the great wall of China. This is, perhaps, most vividly brought home to one who travels down the Danube. Immediately after leaving Budapesth, it is as if you had said good-bye to Europe. For days and nights there is naught to be seen but virgin forests, alternating with endless desolate plains. Even the cattle seem to stray as if wild. After passing Belgrad, Turn Severin, the far-famed "Iron Gates," Peterwardein, once a Turkish stronghold, at last Rustschuk, say, is neared in the twilight of a summer's eve, and a glimpse is caught of the minarets of some Mohammedan mosques, or the veiled figures of Mussulman women sitting by the river-banks. Then for the first time you feel that you are in touch with a creed which can boast a greater number of votaries than Christianity itself; you are in touch with Asia, with far distant Hindostan.

And to the observant stranger who visits Austria, thankful for a change from the eternal sameness of our cosmopolitan civilisation, all this offers many attractions. In the first place, the comparative

absence of West European tourists, particularly those of an objectionable type, enables one to enter into the feeling for indigenous life and character in a manner that is well-nigh impossible in such tourist-ridden countries as Switzerland, Italy, France, and Germany.

VI

But whilst the country population, though gradually feeling more and more the pitiless competition of our age, still retains its peculiar physical type and characteristic dress, whether it be Magyar, Czech, Slovene, Pole, or Teuton, there can be no doubt that the populations of the larger towns are gradually losing their distinctive racial character. Cities such as Cracow, Pesth, Vienna, and Prague indeed produce, among others, a common cosmopolitan effeminate loafer type. Poor puny faces, with prominent teeth and weak little lustreless eyes, are to be seen there, as indeed everywhere in Austria, where money, laziness, and love of pleasure prevail in too great a degree.

Among the masses, however, the prominent symptom visible is a universal growth of the Slavonic, and, though in a lesser degree, the Jewish types. In Vienna, the fine old German patriarchal citizen, with massive head and strong-cut features, is dying out, while a bastard half-Oriental, half-Slavonic type is taking his place. In Prague you may look in vain for the noble Slavonic

figures of the time of John Huss the Reformer. Speaking generally, too, the Czechs of the present day, although the most gifted of the Slaves, do not impress one by their appearance.

In Cracow, moreover, specimens of the pure-bred, fair-haired, dark-eyed Sarmatian Pole, ever famed for his manliness and distinction of bearing, are rarely to be seen. It is just possible that, as one sits in a *café*, an old man may be observed selling the evening papers, whose features still recall the fine type of the Polish aristocracy of yore. So, too, if a church is entered, there may be still seen among the priesthood splendid types of manhood, possibly descendants of those fiery nobles, who, sword in hand, once fought for their rival claims on the floor of the Polish parliament. These priests of Polish aristocratic blood have left a world which offers no scope for the ideals of their race.

VII

One cannot fail to remark that in Hungary the past is lost to sight and mind in consequence of the busy life of to-day. Recent political changes have given to this country new life, and thus brought the present into greater prominence. She, of all the States composing the Austrian Empire, is that to which the existing state of matters is most suited, and the Hungarians accordingly flourish under the new order of things. Being themselves of Asiatic Turanian descent, and largely of Protestant (Cal-

vinistic or Lutheran) faith, they have found less difficulty than others in mingling with the Jews ; for which reason an additional Oriental trait is given to the appearance of the inhabitants.

Strange to say, the women seem to be the least affected physically by the unfavourable modifications of race constantly going on within the Austrian Empire. While the men show deterioration of type, there is a blooming fulness, and now and then rare physical beauty, among the women. Thus, in Vienna the promenade in the Ring Strasse is perhaps unique in the world for its crowd of tall, queen-like women, often to be seen walking arm-in-arm with undersized men.

There is, on the whole, a want of backbone and vitality apparent in the town populations throughout Austria ; a strange debility is observable in their aspect ; and it may be noted that it is extremely rare to meet a type common in England—the hale and hearty old man. The military, indeed, form an exception, and these, almost alone among this *salade* of races and national cross-breeds, still in many instances present the old Teutonic *lands-knecht* type. But even they betray that listlessness and inertia inseparable from most things Austrian. Congregating at street-corners, ogling the ladies as they pass, or squandering their time in *cafés*—even in those of a low class—they form a strange contrast to the correctness of bearing and manner everywhere conspicuous in Germany.

The very amusements in the large towns are

gradually losing the simple character which has hitherto marked them, and are assuming the louder suggestive tone of Paris and Berlin.

VIII

The outward aspect of the leading Austrian-Hungarian towns presents a strange contradiction. The extreme beauty of the architecture of the past, not to mention the grandeur of conception of some buildings of recent date, points irresistibly to human greatness. The majestic beauty of the Hradchin hill of Prague, with its group of palatial structures, might in vain seek its counterpart in all Europe. There is here, in truth, something of the far-famed aspect of Edinburgh, with the silvery river Moldau glittering in the sun, added; and without the unsightly adjuncts of the disreputable and dirty Edinburgh lower town. Of the architectural beauties of Cracow, its churches, its towers, its palaces, it is impossible to give an adequate idea: they must be seen to be appreciated. The Radial Strasse in Budapesth and the Ring Strasse in Vienna, are two of the finest thoroughfares in Europe. Some of the buildings are, perhaps, unsurpassed anywhere. To produce these, there must have been creative genius of a high order; in fact, municipal spirit and enterprise, and men capable of thinking and feeling nobly.

Vienna, with her seventeen splendid monuments, her fifteen public fountains, her twenty-five museums,

and her numberless churches, can vie with any capital in Europe for architectural beauty. When you look closer, however, the contradiction comes home. Then may be detected the striking want of life and energy that permeates the population of Austrian towns, Vienna in particular, and shows that the energetic spirit of the race is not commensurate with the enterprise or sense of beauty of its choicer directing minds. Search will be made in vain for living prototypes of what genius has put in mementoes of stone. The men are out of proportion with the buildings: almost as much so as our English shoddy leasehold structures, hideous churches, and public buildings belie the sterling qualities of the English race.

In most of the larger Austrian towns, from early morn till night, the *cafés* are full of weak types of humanity, slavishly taking their daily intellectual keynote from the few newspapers that are published. This seems to be the very sum of their existence. There is little or no evidence of energy or hard work anywhere here, although, in reality, hidden away in the more obscure quarters of the town, a hard-working population is living on low wages, and slowly and surely imbibing the treacherous tenets of Socialism.

IX

Discipline—moral, mental, and economical—is the one thing Austria lacks all along the line, and which

other nations have only been able to assimilate gradually through the work of generations. Nor are they possessed of the individual initiative which, in a country like England, has striven hard to alleviate the hideous misery for which unfettered *laissez faire* is partly responsible. The high-minded energy that finds its benevolent scope in such societies as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and many others, is non-existent in Austria.

Want of discipline! That one word spells the Nemesis for the sins of omission and commission of our time, and that it is not everywhere apparent is no proof of its not existing in other countries besides Austria. Such things are like the handwriting on the wall, never clearly deciphered by the many, and only felt when the dread moment of collision with fate occurs. No nation can say that its turn will not come to-morrow. The greatest nation will, in the hour of real peril, show itself to be the one in which, other things being about equal, the power of self-sacrifice of the unit is greatest and the direction of its effort most *geistvoll*.

We who have hitherto developed with such astounding success under a system so totally different from what we understand under the almost detested word of discipline, have come to look askance at its significance. But even unto us the rising tide of democracy, with its disclosure of inefficiency in most administrative departments, of ever-increasing competition on the part of others

against us, is full of warning. We need not go to foreign countries to grasp their significance. Have we not in our midst an agitation which, though thoroughly ridiculous from every economic and ethical point of view, has moved the whole English-speaking world by its strength, its only and sole strength and power, its discipline—the Salvation Army?

The inculcation of discipline can never be popular in this world, because it involves sacrifices to which no majority will ever willingly agree, unless moved by stern necessity—perhaps too late. The iron tread of events must, however, prove its imperative necessity, and that whether it be amid streams of bloodshed or in some other form of collective suffering.

X

Believing that the aspirations of a people are more truly rendered by the heartfelt thoughts of its few best minds, rather than by the noisy clamour of its coarse-grained majority, the words of a man such as Rosegger * seem to us to deserve special attention. And this is what he has said anent the present and the future. It is interesting, too, as tending to explain and justify that tenderness for the past which is at the root of much of the best to be observed in Austria as elsewhere :

* Rosegger's *Ausgewählte Werke*. Vol. i. pp. 377–8.

"I also see that we are still a long way from the right track. We prefer to rush forward into uncertainty instead of remaining standing where we are. But when I see how in this frantic rush, or, let us say, in this frantic flight forward, the heart (*das Gemüth*) is blunted (*zu Schaden kommt*)—our most precious possession—and am unable to foresee any compensation for its being so, then I feel inclined to beat a retreat into the wilderness of Nature, unto those petty patriarchal conditions in which mankind has lived through its youthful idyls. And if this cannot be done, because it is impossible, then I would rather—die.

"But no; I trust in the future. Storms will come such as the world has never seen; but if we can only manage to carry along with us the great ideals and the best virtues of our ancestors and of 'the few' of the present day—simplicity, the capacity for self-sacrifice, the instincts of the family, cheerfulness, love, fidelity, and faith in the future, in order to reanimate and diffuse them around us, then all may yet be well."

To this, who would not willingly say, "Amen"?

OPINIONS ON "IMPERIAL GERMANY."

Count Moltke.—"I have read this study on Germany with the greatest interest.

"There can be no doubt that every State requires a government suited to its individual idiosyncrasies. A Constitution like that of England—secure through her geographical position—a Constitution gradually developed out of the character of the nation—could never be transferred to the continent of Europe.

"France—during the last century—has tried alternately monarchy in various forms, empire and republic, without arriving at any definite result.

"Germany, on the other hand, only so recently united as an empire, is an intruder, a *parvenu*, in the family of European States. Hemmed in between mighty neighbours, we are of opinion that we require a strong monarchy. It was therefore a great pleasure for me to find that full justice had been done to the ancient and proven paternal government of the Hohenzollern."

Prince Bismarck.—"I consider the different chapters of this book masterly."

Times.—"Mr. Sidney Whitman's valuable 'Imperial Germany,' a Critical Study of Fact and Character (William Heinemann), a work dedicated to Prince Bismarck, and highly commended both by him and by the late Count Moltke."

Truth.—"A most interesting and instructive critical study of the social, domestic, intellectual, political and military characteristics of the Germany of to-day."

Spectator.—"Of Bismarck his estimate is eminently just and very well put, besides being sympathetic."

Saturday Review (Leading Article).—"The chapters on the aristocracy and on German society are very keen-sighted and impartial."

WILLIAM HEINEMAN, 21 BEDFORD STREET STRAND,

12

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OCTOBER 1892.

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be obtained to order by any Book-
seller if not in stock, or will be sent
by the Publisher post free on receipt
of price.*

Index of Authors.

	PAGE		PAGE
Alexander	13	Jæger	7, 15
Arbuthnot	8	Jeaffreson	3
Atherton	13	Kimball	16
Balestier	9	Kipling and Balestier	9
Barrett	9	Lanza	13
Behrs	3	Le Caron	3
Bendall	16	Lec	10
Björnson	9, 11, 12, 15	Leland	16
Bowen	5	Lie	12
Brown and Griffiths	16	Lowe	6
Buchanan	8, 9, 10, 14	Lynch	13
Butler	5	Maartens	10
Caine	8, 12	Maeterlinck	15
Cambridge	9, 12	Maude	6
Chester	7	Maupassant	11
Clarke	9	Maurice	6
Colomb	6	Mitford	13
Compayre	5	Murray	6
Couperus	11	Norris	9
Davidson	5	Ouida	9
Dawson	16	Palacio-Valdés	11
De Quincey	4, 7	Pearce	10
Dilke	6	Pennell	6
Eeden	6	Philips	14
Ellwanger	7	Phelps	13
Ely	8	Pinero	14
Farrar	7	Rawnsley	8
Fitch	5	Richter	7
Forbes	6	Riddell	9
Fothergill	9	Rives	10
Franzos	11	Roberts	8
Frederic	6, 13	Roberts (V)	12
Garner	6	Robinson	14
Garnett	6	Salaman	7
Gilchrist	9	Scudamore	6
Gore	16	Serao	11
Gosse	7, 9	Sienkiewicz	12
Gray	7	Tasma	9, 10, 13
Gray (Maxwell)	9	Terry	6
Griffiths	16	Thurston	16
Hall	16	Tolstoy	3, 11, 15
Harland	9	Tree	15
Hardy	12	Valera	12
Heine	4	Warden	13
Henderson	6	Weitemeyer	8
Henderson	14	West	5
Howard	10	Whistler	6
Hughes	5	Whitman	3, 8
Hungerford	10, 13	Williams	7
Ibsen	15	Zangwill	6, 9
Irving	6	Zola	9
Ingersoll	8		

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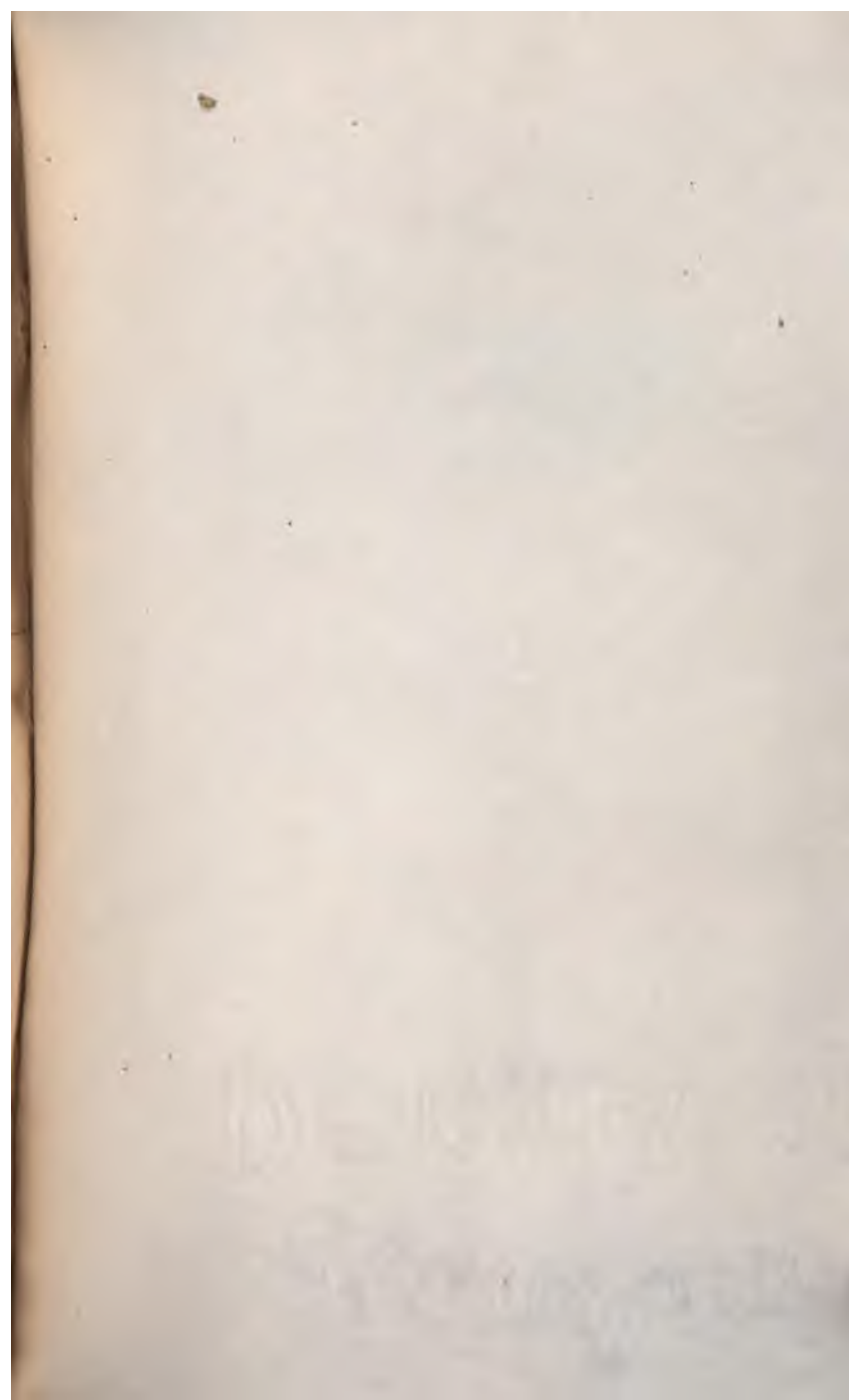
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